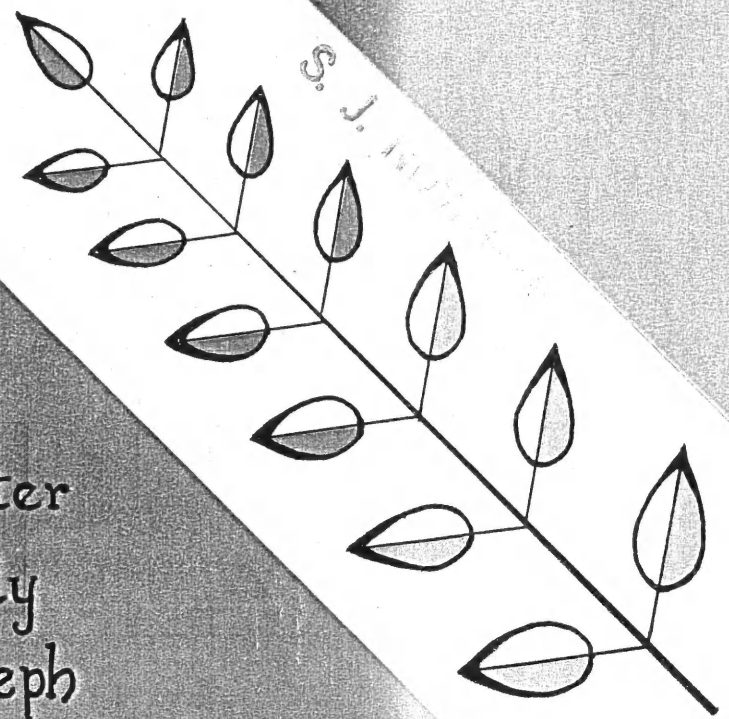
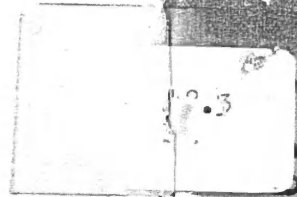


Joseph  
SON OF DAVID



ister  
mily  
Joseph  
C.S.J.



6:26/7-

**JOSEPH  
SON OF DAVID**

**"Can we find another like him in whom is  
the spirit of God? There is no one as intel-  
ligent and prudent as he."**

**(Gen. 41:38-39)**

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**JOSEPH  
SON OF DAVID**

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**Compiled and Edited  
by  
Sister Emily Joseph, C. S. J.**

*L.H.Y. (Sister Emily Joseph)*

St. Anthony's Guild, Paterson, N. J.

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*Bishop of Paterson*

*June 3, 1960*

*Lovingly Dedicated  
To My Mother  
Who Knew and Loved  
St. Joseph*

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## PREFACE

With the clarity characteristic of him, Cardinal Newman has drawn a fine distinction between the doctrinal unity professed by Catholics on matters of faith and the diversified manifestations of their devotion. To illustrate his remarks he cites the case of St. Joseph. "Who," asks the Cardinal, "from his prerogatives and the testimony on which they come to us, had a greater claim to receive an early recognition among the faithful than he? A saint of Scripture, the foster father of Our Lord, he was an object of the universal and absolute faith of the Christian world from the first, yet the devotion to him is comparatively of late date. When once it began, men seemed surprised that it had not been thought of before; and now they hold him next to the Blessed Virgin in their religious affection and veneration."

Some might attribute this late flowering of devotion to the seeming reticence of the Evangelists about the virgin father of Jesus. But are they actually reticent? The Divine Author of Sacred Scripture deposited therein a wealth of hidden doctrinal treasure, upon which St. Joseph's heralds have drawn in order to set forth eloquently his honor, his responsibility, his virtue, his power. Evidence of this is the abundant literature on St. Joseph which arches like a gladdening rainbow from the days of the Evangelists and the Fathers of the Church, through the Middle Ages, to our own day.

This precious heritage provides a rich source of meditative reading, a form of devotion that well accords with the earnest desire of Holy Mother Church that the faith-

ful offer some special sign of devotion to St. Joseph on each Wednesday of the year. Obviously, one might shrink from the task of selecting a limited number of passages from such a profusion of available material. However, with a paraphrase of Duns Scotus' famous prayer, "*Dignare me laudare te, Pater et Custos,*" one may humbly and courageously attempt to focus attention on the loving tributes which have issued from devoted hearts, that others, too, may love him more.

In compiling the readings here presented, an effort has been made to consider literary excellence, diversity of approach, inspirational quality. All passages can claim theologically sound doctrinal content. Material drawn from the apocryphal writings (which assuredly did much disservice to St. Joseph) has been conscientiously avoided. Within the Gospel texts St. Joseph's dignity, sanctity, and unique role in the redemptive plan are expressly stated or divinely implied. His loyal clients find therein satisfying nourishment for their loving contemplation of his life and virtues.

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**JANUARY****FIRST WEEK****Feast of the Circumcision**

*"Whatsoever you do, in word or work, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus," is the advice of St. Paul. As Holy Mother Church commemorates the circumcision of Our Lord, let us recall the intimate part which St. Joseph played in this sacred incident of Christ's life.*

The Holy Family did not remain long in the stable at Bethlehem. . . . Within a very short time after the birth of Jesus, St. Joseph found Him a more becoming place to dwell.

In this new dwelling occurred, after the passage of eight days, the circumcision of the Child. "And after eight days," says St. Luke, "were accomplished that the Child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb" (2:21). Christ, of course, was not bound by the Law, but He wished to fulfill the Law, and also to show that according to the flesh He was descended from Abraham.

The ceremony of circumcision at that time was performed in the home, not, as later, in the synagogue. Sometimes it was the mother who performed the rite, but more generally the father. When the angel had appeared to Joseph in his sleep and told him not to fear to take Mary as his wife — since she had conceived of the Holy Ghost — the angel had said, "And she shall bring forth a Son



and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Thou shalt call His name Jesus! This indicates that it was Joseph who made Jesus shed the first drops of His blood.

It is only a great saint, and a St. Joseph at that, who could begin to tell the deep emotion of the man as, during those days, he faced the mystic ceremony. Joseph was not dealing with an ordinary child; he was dealing with the Son of God. He knew it. All the mysteries of the divine condescension were becoming clear to him as he conversed with Mary and meditated before the Infant God. The glory had been given to him to entertain the Lord of heaven. His eyes were beholding the Redemption of Israel.

More, he was allowed to participate in it in a manner which he had never imagined. To his poor hands was given the dignity to hold the sacrificial knife. Imagine, if you can, the fear of Joseph as he began the rite. In a moment he was to shed the first drop of blood from that Child who, before He would return to His Father, would be drenched in blood. And when he did draw that first drop and realized that now was beginning the mighty act of salvation for mankind, he must almost have swooned at the very joy of it. If Joseph had not already been a saint, he must have become one in that moment.

And he performed the rite, for it was for him to give the Child that hallowed name. Joseph named the Child Jesus. He was the first of all mankind to speak that beloved name. I think that in all his life that was the supreme moment of his existence, that he was chosen by God to be the one who would be the first to say that holy name, Jesus — Saviour!

Therein is all our hope, the name by which we are saved. And Joseph spoke it first. Whenever I hear that name, the picture arises in my mind of Joseph with the knife in his hand, watching the flow of the blood that saves, and then in a voice filled with emotion, in a soft whisper of adoration that held the unction of the prayers of all the saints, speaking for us all our everlasting benediction — Jesus, Saviour. And I like to think that when I come to die I want to find Joseph and beg him to say for me, as only he could say it, that name of my hope. Blessed man will I be to repeat my lesson after him, the blessed among men who was the first man to see the Infant God and the first one to call Him Saviour.

Hugh F. Blunt, GIVE THIS MAN PLACE

## JANUARY

### SECOND WEEK

#### St. Joseph, Head of the Holy Family

*In the divine plan, St. Joseph was chosen for the lofty, though obscure, role of head of the Holy Family. From the official pronouncements of two pontiffs of recent years it is evident that devotion to St. Joseph under this title will bear rich fruits for the entire Mystical Body of Christ.*

It is a fact apparent to all that the welfare of the individual and of the state is, in a special manner, dependent on the family. Insofar as virtue has struck deep roots within the home and the character of children has

been influenced in accordance with religious precepts by the teaching and example of parents, the common interest will be benefited. Consequently, it is of utmost importance, not only that the society of the home be established holily, but also that it be ruled by holy laws, and that the spirit of religion and the standard of Christian living be diligently and steadfastly fostered there. Hence, when God in His mercy decided to carry out the work of man's redemption, so long expected through the centuries, He arranged to perform His task in such a way that in its beginnings it might show forth to the world the august spectacle of a divinely founded family. In this, all men were to behold the perfect exemplar of domestic society, as well as of all virtue and holiness.

Such indeed was the family of Nazareth. In its bosom was concealed the Sun of justice, awaiting in anticipation the time when His full splendors should shine in all the nations — Christ our God, our Saviour, together with His Virgin Mother and Joseph, that most blessed man who exercised the rights of a father over Jesus.

Pope Leo XIII, Apostolic Brief NEMINEM FUGIT

\* \* \*

With the increase of devotion to St. Joseph among the faithful there will necessarily result an increase in their devotion toward the Holy Family of Nazareth of which he was the august head, for these devotions spring spontaneously one from the other. By St. Joseph we are led directly to Mary, and by Mary to the Fountain of all holiness, Jesus Christ, who sanctified the domestic virtues by His obedience toward St. Joseph and Mary.

We desire, then, that these marvelous exemplars of virtue should serve as inspiration and as models for all

Christian families. Even as the family constitutes the fountain of the human race, so by strengthening domestic society with the bonds of purity, fidelity, and concord, a new vigor and, as it were, a new lifeblood shall be diffused through all the members of human society under the vivifying influence of the virtue of Christ.

Pope Benedict XV, Motu Proprio BONUM SANE

## JANUARY

### THIRD WEEK

#### Who Is St. Joseph?

*From the earliest days St. Joseph has been extolled and praised for the singular privileges which Divine Providence conferred upon him. In view of his intimacy with Jesus and Mary, and because of his solicitude for Christ's Mystical Body on earth, there can be no doubt about the extraordinary efficacy of his prayers for his devoted clients.*

He is the adopted father of the God-Man. — St. Luke  
He is the most faithful coadjutor of the Incarnation.  
— St. Bernard

He is the lord and master of the Holy Family. — St. Bernardine

He is the only one found worthy among men to be the spouse of Mary. — St. Gregory

He is the consoler of Mary in her sorrows and trials. — St. Bernard

He is the savior of the life of the Infant Jesus.  
— St. Matthew

He is the savior of the honor of His Mother. — St. Jerome

He is the man who lived thirty years with Jesus and Mary. — Tradition

He is the man more beloved by Jesus and Mary than all other creatures. — St. Isidore

He is the third person of the earthly trinity. — Jean Gerson

He is the model and image of apostolic men. — St. Hilary

He is the model of priests and superiors. — St. Albertus Magnus

He is the guardian of chastity, and the honor of virginity. — St. Augustine

He is the patron of the married state. — Paul de Paul

He is the patron of a happy death. — St. Alphonsus

He is the patron of the Catholic Church. — Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites

Herbert Vaughan, WHO IS ST. JOSEPH?

## JANUARY

### FOURTH WEEK

#### Feast of the Espousals

*On January 23 the Church commemorates the Espousals of Our Lady and St. Joseph. Saints have spoken eloquently of the significance of this holy betrothal, but it requires the pen of a poet to suggest the reverence with which St. Joseph assumed the protection and support of Mary, and the trust with which Mary surrendered her life to his care.*

## WEDDING NIGHT

Snow-white blossoms at her heart  
And stars about her hair.

(Joseph cannot find the words  
To put into his prayer.)

All her raiment, too, is white,  
And white her little hands.  
(Joseph cannot think beyond  
The heaven where she stands.)

Now she takes his candlestick  
And puts it on the sill.  
(Like his love it circles her,  
All radiant and still.)

Joseph vows to keep for love  
(Love hath a magic art),  
Shining stars about her hair —  
White blossoms at her heart.

SISTER MARY ADA

## FEBRUARY

### FIRST WEEK

#### Feast of the Purification

*On the Feast of the Purification our meditation takes us to the Temple in Jerusalem in the company of Mary and Joseph, who prepare to fulfill the prescriptions of the Law by presenting their Infant Son to His heavenly Father. Sorrow and joy are inextricably woven together in this episode.*

Mystery invites meditation. Each incident of Christ's early life in which St. Joseph is mentioned is shrouded in deep mystery. The strange prophecy of the aged Simeon, in particular, involved St. Joseph in profoundest thought and prayer.

Simeon's first words, acclaiming the tiny Babe as the "light of revelation to the Gentiles, and a glory for Thy people Israel," left "His father and mother . . . marveling at the things spoken concerning Him." Boundless joy surged up in the heart of St. Joseph as God's mercy and providence were thus publicly recognized and praised. Then Simeon spoke again. This time his words were directed to Mary alone: ". . . Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:32-35).

St. Joseph was a man of prayer. From frequent recitation of the Psalms, he had become familiar with their

figurative language. Beneath the symbolism of a sword he could easily discover the real meaning of Simeon's words. Sorrow which would pierce to the depths of Mary's being, pain which would drain her very life—this was to be the lot of Mary—and she must bear it alone! Such, St. Joseph realized at once, was the import of the aged man's prophetic utterance.

As the years unfolded, this episode ever more deeply penetrated the heart of St. Joseph. Time and again he pondered the phrases in which Isaias had foretold the humiliations, the sufferings, and ignominious death of the Messias. As he called to mind again and again the words of Simeon which seemed to imply that Mary would suffer alone, the conviction grew that he was not to be asked to witness the redemptive act of Christ. The quick, protective instinct of this man of strength rose up in protest; his strong faith restrained his impulse and made him yield to whatever was demanded by the divine plan. From his submission there flowed into his soul the grace and peace which brought him comfort. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Sister Emily Joseph, REFLECTING ON ST. JOSEPH

## FEBRUARY

### SECOND WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Growth in Grace

*Because he lived so intimately with Christ in Nazareth, St. Joseph enjoyed privileges on earth which were permitted to none other but Our Lady. Likewise, St. Joseph acquired a degree of sanctity which entitles him to our greatest love and admiration.*

With great pleasure I have pored over the Gospel, and it is what I have discovered there that I wish to present to you this evening. This discovery is contained in a single word, the name itself of our hero: "Joseph." For, unlike yours and mine, his name is a whole program in itself, a name in which a vocation is inscribed, and a destiny prefigured. Just as the name of Jesus means "Saviour," and the name of Mary means "Sovereign," so the name of Joseph signifies "the growing one, the one who progresses." And indeed, St. Joseph's whole religious life—like that of his prototype in the Old Testament, who from a slave became the guardian of all the treasures of Egypt—St. Joseph's entire life was a growth, an ascent, and a blossoming in grace. . . . No saint, I am not afraid to say, ever enjoyed so profound a union with Jesus.

Ponder over this a little longer. This face of the Messiah which so many patriarchs of old desired to see and did not see, which Abraham alone was able to see in a momentary vision, a mystic experience—this face, Joseph contemplated for days, months, and years in all its various changes, as the face of a child, a youth, and a man. This tiny body, which Simeon held in his arms for just a few short minutes, which St. Anthony of Padua will one day receive into his arms from those of the Most Blessed Virgin but will be obliged to return at once—this little Babe, Joseph carried thousands of times with all the tenderness of a foster father. This voice of the Well-beloved Son to which the Father will command us to listen, Joseph heard both when it attempted the lisping words of a little child and when in more serious tones it explained to him the mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Shall I go into further details, too frequently overlooked? It was Joseph, with Mary, who guided the first steps on

earth of Him whose power directs the peoples in the march of history and sets in motion the planets in the heavens. For thirty years they ate and drank together; together they took their rest; and together on the terrace of their home they continued their evening prayer in prolonged colloquies under the light of the stars.

Now truly, I repeat, with the exception of the Virgin Mary, no saint lived so intimately with Jesus as Joseph, no saint, even St. Paul, who will catch a glimpse of the Lord of glory for a fleeting instant; not even St. John, who will place his head on the breast of Jesus for a few brief moments only. And this long, penetrating intimacy explains how little by little Joseph grew in the divine friendship as a heavenly body climbing in the skies increases in magnitude and brilliancy. He rose to such lofty heights of sanctity that in the judgment of certain Doctors he has become the greatest saint in the Church. Indeed he was Joseph, a growing son, a very son of progress.

Gabriel Fournel, THE HEROIC LIFE OF ST. JOSEPH  
ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL

## FEBRUARY

### THIRD WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Divine Inspiration

*To St. Joseph in his perplexities God sent an angel to make known His Divine Will. These, however, were exceptional occurrences. Ordinarily, the Holy Spirit illumined the heart and mind of St. Joseph by quiet inspirations. We, too, can expect such communications from the Holy Spirit if we live, as St. Joseph lived, by faith.*

Joseph, Mary's spouse, also was inspired by the Holy Ghost. Joseph, a simple man, a carpenter who knew and loved his God, was endowed with that supernatural faith which enabled him to understand what had been revealed to him concerning Mary and the Child she bore. He was first human in doubt yet steadfast in the trust God had reposed in him. To him had been confided the persons of the Mother of God and Jesus. Joseph was first Mary's protector against a world not ready for the mystery, the founder of her home and her provider; and later, the head of the Holy Family to whom obedience was given and which he accepted with all the more humility as it was the will of God.

Significantly, there is no recorded word of Joseph — he is seen only through what he did and what was imparted to him, through his complete obedience to the divine will. Mary's solicitous companion on the long, hard journey from Nazareth to the City of David — a journey forced on them by the Roman law of the census — he met with her the rebuffs at the doors of Bethlehem, discovered the half-stable, half-cave for their shelter. That the Catholic Church has designated him the patron of the Universal Church is eminently in keeping with the tenderness and vigilance with which he guarded the Mother and Child appointed to his care.

With Mary, Joseph was the first to greet the Messiah, the Infant laid in an improvised crib, of whom God had said: "Before the daystar I begot Thee." Nothing that Joseph did then or later indicates that he, like the majority of his countrymen, was startled and filled with consternation that the Saviour should be born in poverty and obscurity, that His first visitors should be the uncouth shepherds of the neighboring hill pasturelands. He knew, or learned, the overwhelming significance of the events

in which he so intimately participated. Like Mary, he pondered in his heart the words God spoke to him. For the Incarnation has for man a wide and varied significance, shown forth by God Himself in His revelations to the prophets of the Old Testament and demonstrated anew in the life and deeds and words of Christ.

John Gilland Brunini, WHEREON TO STAND

## FEBRUARY

### FOURTH WEEK

#### St. Joseph in Adoration

*The prayer of petition is more familiar to most of us than the prayer of adoration. However, since in heaven we shall be forever engaged in the prayer of adoration, it would be well for us to begin the practice of it here on earth. St. Joseph can instruct us well.*

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! One can never break up the Holy Family. But in the cave of Bethlehem Joseph seems to go into the background, more deeply into the shadows. . . . I never knew as well the meaning of silent adoration as when I thought of Joseph in those first moments before the manger. It was a moment wherein words could mean little. There were the thoughts of thousands of years, the aspirations of his people, the gratitude of generations yet to come, all to be expressed; and there was no expression for the inexpressible but a sigh of love. And when, a short time later, the adoring shepherds came, with their humble gifts, they must have found him still



on his knees hidden away in the shadows of the stable. content to be unknown, hidden, silent. The saintly Father Eymard calls St. Joseph the perfect model for the life of adoration. "He nourished Him," he says, "whom the faithful were one day to receive as the Bread of Life."

I like to think of Joseph in those days of the dwelling in the stable as wrapped about with silence. It was the first retreat that any man made in the presence of the Son of God. Little Jesus was preaching silently from His manger pulpit, and the souls of Mary and Joseph listened. Words would but interrupt that communication of love and grace. It was a silence of joy.

Joseph was not a moody individual. He was a practical man. Even when heaven comes down to earth the life of earth must go on. There was work to be done, food to be provided, the future to be arranged for. Joseph did all that I can picture him doing: going to the town, complying with the demands of the government in regard to the census which had been the occasion of his return to Bethlehem, seeking food for Mary and himself, and meeting some of the people who had heard of the wonderful things that had happened in the stable. But I cannot fancy him loquacious upon the events in which he had participated. God was working in silence, even in the silence of a speechless Babe, and it was not for Joseph to break that silence. Who was he to forestall God?

And so I like to learn that lesson of silent prayer. Heart speaks to heart. Is it too presumptuous when I kneel before the Tabernacle to imagine that I am Joseph? Is that not the time when all words seem inadequate? No matter how beautiful the prayers that have been composed, even by the saints, they seem to fall short of the glory of

silent longing. Just a faithful watchdog at the feet of its Master.

Amid the babble of the world, when everybody flatters himself that he has a message to give, it is a good corrective to look at Joseph. He could have given a message well worth while, but he never gave it. He knew that God had given His message and that it was not for a poor carpenter to seek to add to that message.

Hugh F. Blunt, GIVE THIS MAN PLACE



## MARCH

### FIRST WEEK

#### March — A Month of Grace

*During the month of March, Holy Mother Church directs the thoughts and devotion of the faithful to St. Joseph. Great graces and favors are sure to be the reward of those who honor him in a special manner during this month.*

*March has no friends;  
There's cold . . .  
we are weary of cold;  
There's wind . . .  
we do not like wind;  
There's uncertainty . . .  
when we hunger for security.\**

Joseph lived much of his life in the climate of March. March is cold. So was the world in which Joseph lived. Christ had not yet preached His doctrine of Love. The reigning moral was "an-eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-for-a-tooth." "Love your enemies" was scoffed at as weakness. To be rich and powerful was a sign of heavenly benediction; to be poor was a crime. Joseph's reception by the innkeeper at Bethlehem most probably typifies the attitude he met so often. 2,000 years ago he shared the lot of the twentieth century's most abandoned refugee.

\*Quoted from "Joseph of Nazareth," by John B. Royer, The Deitz Press, Inc., Richmond, Va.

March is the month of gusty winds. Joseph's life was beset with the wind of adversity and persecution. Soldiers pursued him seeking the life of his Child. He must certainly have known the rebuffs and adversities of the humble, unprotected worker of his age. Great saints are born out of great conflict; the greatness of his sanctity bespeaks the greatness of his adversity.

March is the month of uncertainty. Spring is yet only a promise. Winter supplies are dwindling. For men who live by the soil, it is a month of agonizing uncertainty. All their agricultural skills idly await Nature's capricious smile. The security of next winter is dependent upon the promise of Spring. Joseph's life was a succession of Marches. He was a day laborer and so uncertain of tomorrow's contract. He knew the uncertainty of a foreigner in a strange land. Most agonizing of all was the inner uncertainty concerning Mary. How could the Virgin be with child?

March is the month of St. Joseph.

*It is well that March is Joseph's month:*

*Joseph of Nazareth.*

*For warmth*

*We may think of the pure flame  
of his love*

*For Jesus and for Mary.*

*For rest from wind*

*We may think of the unfailing  
protection he gave*

*To Jesus and to Mary.*

*For certainty*

*We may think of his rocklike  
faith in the Living God.\**

We all live a part of our lives in the climate of March. . . . In a spirit of faith, rejoice, for it is a time of grace, if we pray longingly for divine aid. As a source of inspiration and a model, God has given us the glorious example of St. Joseph. But Joseph is more than just a model. He is our Protector and Friend. The Church has chosen him as our Patron in all needs. On earth he watched over and protected the Child Jesus. In heaven he continues to protect Christ's Mystical Body, which means you and me.

March . . . is the month of St. Joseph, our great friend. . . . During that blessed month, from early morning until late at night thousands of tongues will fervently invoke St. Joseph's benediction upon the innumerable requests of his needy children. . . . So much intense prayer addressed to God through Joseph cannot but be a promise of a new Spring for the world and ourselves. If we but will it, the month of March will see God's grace shine back on our lives and on the world like the sunrise of a new Resurrection.

Editorial from THE ORATORY

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\*Ibid.

## MARCH

### SECOND WEEK

#### A Saint for Modern Times

***Not only by our prayers, but more especially by our imitation of his manner of life, we pay honor to St. Joseph. In our attitude toward our work we should strive to reflect the serenity, the compliance with God's will, the joy of spirit which radiated from the workshop of the carpenter of Nazareth.***

St. Joseph is not only a practical saint but seems specially fashioned by God for our modern times. He is, we might say, the modern saint. Each period of history has its own peculiar dangers and needs, and God in His infinite wisdom and goodness provides it with corresponding remedies. For several decades a new force has been developing, and today is fully developed. It is the power of the sons of untiring labor, but not the well-ordered, God-ordained labor based on trust in God. This latter type of labor gives no cause for anxiety since it has been in the world from the beginning of the human race, is the lot of all men, is their honor and privilege. God has blessed it and in His Son sanctified and almost deified it. We fear rather that restless drudgery, that toil divorced from God and the supernatural; we fear that unbounded self-seeking, greed for money, possessions, pleasures; we fear the power of a cruel, untrammelled self-government that would erect its throne without God and the Church, on the ruins of the old order and existing institutions, yea, upon the ruins of family life itself. The true names of this monster, the unholy progeny of all social disorders, are unbelief, materialism, revolution,

anarchy, class and racial hatred. Where shall we find the help provided by God for these evil times? Where is the new man, the new power, prepared by God to take a decided stand in behalf of justice, order, God's glory, and man's welfare? Who can it be but the exalted personage of unselfish attachment to duty, the man of obedience, faith, and trust in God, of humility and willing devotion to labor? Who but St. Joseph, the calm, earnest man of noble ancestry, but poor and humble by choice; St. Joseph, who on a former occasion saved the nascent Church, then represented by the Holy Family, from the bloody hands of a ruthless persecutor? Why else has God been preparing a way in the Church during the last century for the devotion to St. Joseph? Why else has He exalted him just at these critical times to the position of protector of the Universal Church? He is indeed the man in whose hands God has placed the destinies of the Church. Let us then trust in him. We shall certainly not be confounded.

Moritz Meschler, ST. JOSEPH

## MARCH

### THIRD WEEK

#### St. Joseph, Protector of Holy Church

*In her official litany composed in honor of St. Joseph, Holy Mother Church salutes and invokes him as "Protector of Holy Church." This title is rightly his in the light of the doctrine of the Mystical Body. The record of St. Joseph's fidelity during his life on earth in protecting Christ guarantees that now, in heaven, he continues to protect and cherish Christ's Church on earth.*

All the saints in heaven are deeply concerned about every soul whose sanctification or salvation still hangs in the fickle balance of its own free will. But until the Book of Life is filled, St. Joseph must be conceived as the powerful and ever dependable official protector and grand almoner for all human souls on earth who are already adopted or destined to be adopted into the family of God.

Hence, who will doubt that St. Joseph, the spouse of the Virgin Mother of the incarnate Son of God, and the foster father to that Son Himself, is all love and solicitude for every member of the Church Militant, which is precisely the growing Mystical Body of his Foster Son? Or who will doubt that this personal interest of St. Joseph in every individual son and daughter of his spouse, and every brother and sister of his Divine Foster Child, is of a more intimate and delicate nature than that of the other saints?

Of course, during his life on earth Joseph scarcely had knowledge of the coming extension of Mary's Virgin Motherhood, nor of his own corresponding foster fatherhood, nor of Holy Church as the Mystical Body of his Foster Child. But now in heaven, with his fuller entrance into the mysteries of Nazareth and Bethlehem, and even of Good Friday and the Resurrection, as they are living on in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and stand revealed to him in heaven, how utterly beyond our present conception must be his appreciation of the high privilege of exercising his transcendent foster fatherhood!

Evidently, therefore, you cannot be wrong when you conceive the heart of St. Joseph in heaven as exceptionally like the heart of Mary, like the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

and like your heavenly Father's own heart of mercy, bounty, and love. Are you surprised at Holy Church's *Ite ad Joseph* — "Go to Joseph"?

Leo M. Krenz, OUR WAY TO THE FATHER

## MARCH

### FOURTH WEEK

#### The Vocation of St. Joseph

*"The Providence of God" — by this phrase we profess our belief that God has foreseen the course of our life, has drawn up in advance a blueprint, as it were, and has selected a role which He intends us to fulfill. This role is our vocation. No two men have the same vocation. Each case is individualized, particularized. St. Joseph teaches us how we can fulfill even the most insignificant-appearing role in such a way that it is sanctified.*

Properly to understand the nobility and grandeur of St. Joseph's hidden life we have to go back to the beginning, and notice first of all the endless variety of God's dealings with respect to different vocations. Among them all, I remark two in the Scriptures that seem to be directly opposed to one another: the vocation of the Apostles, and that of St. Joseph. Jesus is revealed to the one and to the other, but in strongly contrasting conditions. He is revealed to the Apostles in order that they may preach Him throughout the world; He is revealed to Joseph in order that he may hide Him and keep silent about Him. The Apostles are shining lights whereby men may see

Jesus; Joseph is a veil to cover Him, a veil that hides Mary's virginity and the greatness of the Saviour of mankind. . . .

What are we to think of this contrast? Is God contradicting Himself in these different vocations? Do not suppose that, brethren. This diversity teaches God's children the important truth that the whole of Christian perfection consists in being submissive. He who glorifies the Apostles in the renown of their preaching glorifies St. Joseph in the humility of his silence; and from that we have to learn that the glory of Christians lies, not in distinguished achievements and offices, but in doing what God wills. Not everyone can have the honor of preaching Jesus Christ, but all can have the honor of obeying Him: that was Joseph's glory, and that is the glory of Christianity. . . .

So, good Christians, do not ask me what St. Joseph did in his hidden life. I cannot tell you; all I can do is to ask in turn, with the Psalmist, "What has the just man done?" . . . David implies that he has done nothing — nothing, that is, in men's eyes, for all that the just man has done is meant for the eyes of God. The righteous Joseph lived in precisely that way: he saw Jesus, and he said nothing; for him God was enough, without the esteem of men. He fulfilled his vocation: the Apostles were called to be ministers of the public Christ, Joseph was called to be minister and companion to the hidden Jesus.

Bossuet, FIRST PANEGYRIC UPON ST. JOSEPH

## APRIL

### FIRST WEEK

#### Limbo

*It is Good Friday. The pain-racked Body of the Saviour has gasped its last. The Redemption has been accomplished, and the first to hear the joyous tidings are the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Law who patiently wait in limbo for the opening of heaven's gates. Among them is St. Joseph. Is it not a scene that prompts meditation?*

The ancient greyness shifted  
Suddenly and thinned  
Like mist upon the moors  
Before a wind.  
An old, old prophet lifted  
A shining face and said:  
"He will be coming soon.  
The Son of God is dead;  
He died this afternoon."

A murmurous excitement stirred  
All souls.  
They wondered if they dreamed —  
Save one old man who seemed  
Not even to have heard.  
And Moses, standing,  
Hushed them all to ask  
If any had a welcome song prepared.

If not, would David take the task?  
And if they cared,  
Could not the three young children sing  
The Benedicite, the canticle of praise  
They made when God kept them from perishing  
In the fiery blaze?

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A breath of spring surprised them,  
Stilling Moses' words.  
No one could speak, remembering  
The first fresh flowers,  
The little singing birds.  
Still others thought of fields new-ploughed  
Or apple trees  
All blossom-boughed.  
Or some, the way a dried bed fills  
With water  
Laughing down green hills.  
The fisherfolk dreamed of the foam  
On bright blue seas.  
The one old man who had not stirred  
Remembered home.  
And there He was,  
Splendid as the morning sun and fair  
As only God is fair.  
And they, confused with joy,  
Knelt to adore,  
Seeing that He wore  
Five crimson stars  
He never had before.

No canticle at all was sung.  
 None toned a psalm,  
 Or raised a greeting song.  
 A silent man alone  
 Of all that throng  
 Found tongue —  
 Not any other.  
 Close to His Heart  
 When the embrace was done,  
 Old Joseph said,  
 "How is Your Mother,  
 How is Your Mother, Son?"

Sister Mary Ada, LIMBO

## APRIL

### SECOND WEEK

#### Patron of the Universal Church

*"Some saints are privileged to extend to **us** their patronage in certain cases, but not in others, with peculiar efficiency; but to our holy patron St. Joseph it is given to assist **us** in all cases, in every necessity, in every undertaking."* — St. Thomas Aquinas

The special reasons and causes for St. Joseph being named patron saint of the Church, and for the Church relying so much on his consequent aid and protection, are that he was Mary's husband and was looked on as the father of Jesus Christ. His importance, his grace, his holiness, his glory, all arise from that. The dignity of

the Mother of God is indeed so high that no created being can be above her. But Joseph was joined with her in marriage, and it cannot be doubted that he comes nearer than anybody else to the height of that dignity by which the Mother of God surpasses all other creatures. Marriage is the closest of all associations and unions, and is of such a kind that it involves community of goods between those bound by it. When God gave Joseph as husband to the Virgin He gave her a companion in life, a witness to her maidenhood, a guardian of her honor; but, in virtue of the marriage compact, He also gave her a sharer in her own most high dignity.

In like manner, Joseph's exalted position stands out luminously among men, because he was by divine will guardian of the Son of God and considered to be His father by the people. So it came about that the Word of God was humbly subject to Joseph, that He was obedient to him, and that He gave him all the dutifulness that children owe to their parents.

By this twofold office Joseph incurred the responsibilities that nature imposes on the father of a family: he was the guardian, the breadwinner, the natural and rightful protector, of the divine household of which he was the head; and in fact he fulfilled these duties and responsibilities throughout his mortal life. Lovingly and carefully he looked after his wife and the Divine Child from day to day; daily he worked to earn what was necessary for their food and clothing; when the Child was threatened by a king's jealousy, he found a place of refuge and saved His life; he was the unwearying companion, solace, and support of his family in the dangers and discomforts of journeys and the bitterness of exile.

Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical QUAMQUAM PLURIES

## APRIL

## THIRD WEEK

## St. Joseph, "Father of the Church"

*When we invoke St. Joseph as our father, we are not using a figure of speech. St. Joseph was truly the virgin father of Christ. We are truly the members of the Mystical Christ, we who constitute the visible Church. There is only one Christ, the whole Christ. St. Joseph's responsibility, arising from his paternal vocation, binds him to all his children, and gives them the right to expect from him the loving protection and guidance a father owes his children.*

As is the case of Joseph's position as head of the Holy Family, so his patronage of the Church grows out of his fundamental position of husband and father. . . . In the words of Leo XIII: "The divine household which Joseph governed as with paternal authority contained the beginnings of the new Church. The Virgin most holy is the Mother of all Christians since she is the Mother of Jesus and since she gave birth to them on the Mount of Calvary amid the unspeakable sufferings of the Redeemer. Jesus is, as it were, the Firstborn of Christians, who are His brothers by adoption and redemption. From these considerations we conclude that the blessed Patriarch must regard all the multitude of Christians who constitute the Church as confided to his care in a certain special manner. This is his numberless family, scattered throughout all lands, over which he rules with a sort of paternal authority because he is the husband of Mary and the father of Jesus Christ. Thus, it is conformable to reason and in

every way becoming to blessed Joseph that, as once it was his sacred trust to guard with watchful care the family of Nazareth, no matter what befell, so now by virtue of his heavenly patronage he is in turn to protect and to defend the Church of Christ."

Joseph's patronage of the Church is something unique, shared with him by no other saint. Michael the Archangel and the Apostles Peter and Paul do not have rank so exalted. Michael's task is that of a quasi-military protector; Peter and Paul are the foundations of the Church at Rome; but only Joseph is, if one can use the expression, "father of the Church." As Leo XIII pointed out, it is this note of fatherly protection that characterizes Joseph's patronage: fatherly love for everyone, everywhere, in that Church which is the outgrowth of the family at Nazareth. It is all the more excellent because it is so universal, and because it is based on an original vocation and an attitude toward Christ's Church, a love that is subordinate only to that of Our Lady.

Francis L. Filas, THE DIGNITY OF ST. JOSEPH

## APRIL

## FOURTH WEEK

## The Mission of St. Joseph

*The words of a saintly and learned theologian establish clearly the basis of devotion to St. Joseph and justify the confidence which his clients place in his power of intercession. Let us ponder the sanctity of this illustrious saint, study his virtues, and strive to imitate them.*



The reason for Joseph's pre-eminence is that an exceptional divine mission demands a proportionate exceptional sanctity. St. Thomas applies this principle to Jesus, to Mary, and to the Apostles. It is also applicable to St. Joseph and to the great servants whom God chooses directly for Himself; for God does all things with measure, might, and sweetness. The mission of St. Joseph is unique in the world for all time. His mission is not only elevated above the natural order, but it exceeds the order of grace; it belongs to the order of the hypostatic union constituted by the mystery of the Incarnation. The mission of St. John the Baptist and that of the Apostles belongs to the order of grace and of salvation; that of St. Joseph approaches the mission of Mary, the Mother of God. . . .

St. Joseph's virtues are especially those of the hidden life and are in proportion to his degree of sanctifying grace: virginity, humility, poverty, patience, prudence, unshakable fidelity, simplicity, faith enlightened by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, trust in God, and perfect charity. He preserved these God-given treasures with a fidelity proportionate to their inestimable value. Bossuet says: "It is a vice common to men to give themselves entirely to exterior things and to neglect interior things; to work for show and appearance and to neglect the effective and the solid . . . and yet all the mystery of genuine virtue is in its secret character. . . . Otherwise there is only the semblance of virtue, which does not make a man according to the heart of God. Joseph, the simple man, sought God; Joseph, the detached man, found God; Joseph, the withdrawn man, enjoyed God."

St. Joseph's humility was confirmed by the thought of the gratuity of his exceptional vocation. Why did our

heavenly Father give His only Son to me, Joseph, to safeguard? "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" Joseph appears as the most humble of all the saints after Mary, more humble than any of the angels. Because Joseph is the most humble, he is the greatest of all — for, the virtues being related, the depth of humility is proportionate to the elevation of charity. Jesus Himself says: "He who is the lesser among you, he is the greater" (Luke 9:48). Joseph, far from boasting of his gifts, hid himself, enjoying peacefully with God the mystery revealed to him. "He possesses the God-man and says nothing about it."

In spite of the obscurity of the angel's words, in spite of the poverty which was accentuated at Bethlehem where there was "no place in the inn" during Christmas night, the faith of Joseph was unshakable. He suffered because he had nothing to give Mary and her Son. His trust in God was manifested in trial, during the flight into Egypt. His love of God and souls did not cease to grow at Nazareth, particularly when he held the Child Jesus in his arms, the Child who is the source of ever new and ever loftier graces. The acceleration of the growth of his charity was prodigious, being far more rapid in later life than in his youth.

Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange,  
ST. JOSEPH AND PROVIDENCE

## MAY

### FIRST WEEK

#### St. Joseph the Workman

*Our late Holy Father Pius XII exalted the position of St. Joseph by establishing a new liturgical feast in his honor and appointing May 1 for its observance. On this day the carpenter of Nazareth is invoked as Patron of Workmen. Many years ago another great pontiff, Leo XIII, spoke eloquently of the example St. Joseph offered to those who have to work to support their families. His words have an impressive timeliness today.*

In every land all sorts of people recommend and entrust themselves to the blessed Joseph's faithfulness and keeping, and there are good reasons for this. . . .

But workers, small wage earners and other people of modest condition have a special right to turn to St. Joseph and seek to imitate him. Here he was, a man of royal blood, joined in marriage with the greatest and holiest of women, reputed to be father of the Son of God — yet he spent his whole life working, and looked to an artisan's job for all that he required for the support of his family.

It is sure, then, that there is nothing to be despised in a lowly position; and a laborer's work is not only not dishonoring — when virtue is joined with it, it can be highly ennobling. Joseph was satisfied with the little he had, and he brought greatness of soul to his acceptance of the difficulties inherent in the humble state of his fortunes;

and in so doing he was emulating his Son, who took the form of a servant and — He, the Lord of all — willingly subjected Himself to poverty and want.

Such thoughts as these ought to encourage the poor and all who live by the work of their hands, and enable them to see things in their true perspective. They have the right to get rid of their poverty and to better themselves by legitimate means, but reason and justice forbid that they should overturn the order that God's providence has established. Moreover, recourse to violence, attempts at sedition and use of force, are senseless methods, which generally aggravate the evils against which they are directed. So, if they would be wise, the poor should put no trust in the promises of agitators, but turn rather to the example and help of St. Joseph, and to their loving Mother the Church, who every day becomes more and more concerned for their welfare.

Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical QUAMQUAM PLURIES

## MAY

### SECOND WEEK

#### Model of Workingmen

*No loyal Catholic can ignore the earnest recommendations of the Holy Father. Following the example of his predecessor, and prompted by the distressing dangers which beset the working classes, Pope Benedict XV urged upon them devotion to St. Joseph. Again, the point is stressed that a study of this great saint's life should lead to imitation of his example.*

There is question now of an evil that has crept into the very heart of society. For the scourge of war had been laid on the human race at the very moment that it had become profoundly infected with naturalism — that great worldly plague which, wherever it enters, lessens the desire for heavenly things, extinguishes the flame of Divine Love, and deprives man of the healing and elevating grace of Christ, leaving him without the light of faith, dependent on the weak and corrupt resources of nature, and the slave of unbridled human passion. Thus it happened that many devoted themselves solely to the acquisition of worldly goods. Moreover, while the contest between the wealthy and the proletariat had already become acute, class hatred now became still more grave by reason of the length and severity of the war, for while this, on the one hand, brought intolerable privation to the masses, on the other it rapidly made fortunes for the few. . . .

Meanwhile, preoccupied above all else with this course of events, We have not failed to renew in the sons of the Church a sense of their duty, whenever the occasion presented itself. . . . And so now, prompted by the same motive — namely, to recall to their duty those of our own fold, however many, who earn their bread by the labor of their hands, and to preserve them immune from the contagion of Socialism, than which nothing is more opposed to Christian wisdom — We have with great solicitude placed before them in a particular manner the example of St. Joseph, that they may follow him as their special guide and may honor him as their heavenly patron.

It was he who, in very deed, lived a life similar to theirs; and for this reason Our Lord Jesus Christ, though in truth the only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father,

wished to be called the "Son of the carpenter." Yet how many and how great were the virtues with which he adorned his poor and humble condition! And among all these virtues, none was wanting to ennoble the man who was to be the husband of Mary Immaculate and the foster father of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let all persons, then, learn from Joseph to consider present passing affairs in the light of future good which will endure forever; and find consolation amid human vicissitudes in the hope of heavenly things, that so they may aspire to them in a manner conformable to the Divine Will — that is, by living soberly, justly, and piously.

Pope Benedict XV, Motu Proprio BONUM SANE

## MAY

### THIRD WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Attitude toward Work

*All too often we tend to enshrine the saints in an ethereal bliss beyond the borders of our here-and-now strenuous, nerve-straining world. This is not the way in which we can profit by our membership in the Communion of Saints. In our meditations on St. Joseph we should envision him at his carpenter's bench, accepting directions from a customer about a piece of furniture or farm implement that is being ordered. St. Joseph fits into the twentieth century easily. He fits into the life of a homemaker, a breadwinner. He fits into the picture of your life and mine!*

There is a twofold aspect of work. . . . By his work man becomes a co-creator, taking the raw materials God provides, and making from them the things we need: food, clothing, shelter. Man was called upon to work, to cultivate the Garden, *before the Fall*. It was only after the Fall that work became a penance, too; when God said, "Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labor and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return."

These are strong words, these words of Holy Scripture, and the horror of the Fall, the greatness of the disaster, the blackness of all sin, can be seen in the results in the world today: the thorns and thistles, the scorched earth of man-made droughts, radioactive dust from man-made "fire from heaven." What chance is there of man feeling a sense of his dignity and worth when all his creativeness has turned to destruction, to manufacturing for destruction?

At a time like this the Holy Father is directing our attention to St. Joseph the Workman, Protector of the Holy Family, a family which lived in an "occupied country," a family which became, for a time, a refugee family in the land of Egypt. The Holy Father directs our attention to St. Joseph, a man who earned his living by the sweat of his brow, who, when he returned to Nazareth, built and furnished the home and provided the means to buy food for the Blessed Mother and the Child.

So much has been written about the public life of Our Lord that we might forget the hidden years. And

perhaps, too, the Holy Father in this time of great crisis by pointing to those hidden years, by instituting this new feast, is showing us how men should proceed today, when they feel so powerless in the face of world conflict. They should proceed after the example of St. Joseph, who was a *workman*, not a Scribe, not a Pharisee, not a teacher in the Temple. St. Joseph was occupied in a small village as a carpenter, making tables and chairs, ploughs and flails for the sowing and reaping. He made spindles for spinning, looms for weaving. We can know with certainty that Jesus Christ played among Joseph's tools as an Infant and soon learned to use them as a Child. St. Joseph's work was done slowly and in silence. The pay was adequate for human needs, for what is necessary to sustain life; it did not provide for a life of luxury. . . .

St. Joseph is close to us today, ready to hear our prayers — especially if we pray to come closer to Nazareth, closer to the workshop, to the soil, to the simple and healthy life of that day.

Dorothy Day, ST. JOSEPH, WORKMAN

## MAY

### FOURTH WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Devotion to Mary

*"The Evangelists say little of the virtues and life of St. Joseph; but when they call him the spouse of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, they give him the most glorious title possible; for he was nearest in every way to Mary, the purest creature ever made by God Almighty."*

— St. Leonard of Port Maurice

To arrive at a true idea of the dignity of Mary's husband, we take for granted a general appreciation of the true dignity of Mary, for that is the norm. God certainly did not choose an unworthy man to be the husband of the virgin Mother of God, linked so closely to the mystery of God becoming man. . . .

When Mary visited Elizabeth, her cousin exclaimed, "How have I deserved that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" Yet the visit of Mary to Elizabeth was something brief and temporary. If, even as such, it was to be considered such a magnificent honor, what must be the honor of living with Mary in the intimacy of family life for some thirty years, a privilege that only Joseph possessed as Mary's husband and for which he alone was chosen?

Moreover, because of the marriage, Our Lady was subject to St. Joseph. St. Paul says of matrimony that the "husband is the head of the wife as Christ is Head of the Church." Joseph, then, was in authority over Mary. His dignity on this score can be surpassed only by the fact that Jesus, too, was subject to the Saint. By reason of Mary's holiness and her vocation as Mother of God, Our Lady was God's choicest creature, the living Ark of the Covenant. Providence entrusted this treasure to St. Joseph to be protected and cherished. No other creature, either angel or human, ever had so responsible a relationship.

Joseph's excellence also stands out by a consideration of the ties of love that existed between him and Our Lady. The fact is that Mary loved Joseph as she has never loved any other creature. She would not have been perfect in her vocation as the virgin wife of St. Joseph if her love for her husband had been surpassed by any other human affection. Conversely, Joseph as husband was bound to

love Mary as he loved no other except God Himself. Joseph became the only created person to hold the primacy of Mary's love and to return it. . . .

God chose St. Joseph to be the husband of Our Lady, and God considered the Saint worthy of such a post. The Church put this idea into the oration for the former feast of the Solemnity of St. Joseph: "O God, who in Thine ineffable providence wast pleased to choose blessed Joseph as the spouse of Thy most holy Mother. . . ." God foresaw Joseph's co-operation and bestowed on him the position in the Holy Family. . . . The marriage of the Saint and Our Lady was expressly brought into existence by God in order to serve the Incarnation. The only man God chose for the husband was St. Joseph, to parallel the divine selection of Mary.

Francis L. Filas, JOSEPH MOST JUST

## JUNE

## FIRST WEEK

## St. Joseph and the Sacred Heart

*St. Joseph's clients frequently call upon him under a title that is very dear to him: "St. Joseph, friend of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!" As we intensify our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Christ during this month of June, let us try to imitate the fervor, generosity, and perfect charity with which St. Joseph served his foster Son.*

All that concerns St. Joseph must be very dear to the Heart of Jesus; for to the Heart of Jesus St. Joseph was dear from the first on earth, and grew dearer each day through his life — and what is he now in heaven? At the beginning, in the very earliest throb of love that sent the precious blood more swiftly through the veins of the new-born Saviour, first after the Immaculate Mother, Joseph must have claimed his special share. Nay, that was not the beginning even on earth. And before earth itself began, "Devotion to St. Joseph" began — when in the everlasting councils of Infinite Wisdom the Almighty Father, looking forward out of the depths of His unbeginning eternity, singled St. Joseph out from all the generations of the sons of men to be the guardian and spouse of the purest, and highest, and best-loved of His creatures, to be the guardian and foster father of His own Divine co-equal Son — image and representative to the one of her Divine Spouse, the Holy Ghost; to the other, of His

Father in heaven. When, before the Heart of Jesus had yet begun to beat, before Jesus was Jesus, before the world was yet made — when the Word in the bosom of the Father said, "Behold I come," He meant to come as the Blessed Virgin's Child, as the Son of her whose spouse would be St. Joseph. It has been often said that when God chooses any of His poor creatures for some great and high end, His very choice endows them with gifts proportionate to their work and dignity. "It is by comparing God's choice of him with the office he was to fill, that we come to see the glory and the grandeur of St. Joseph, and to contemplate with reverent awe the heights of a holiness to which such familiarity with God was permitted" (Father Faber).

Matthew Russell, ST. JOSEPH OF JESUS AND MARY

## JUNE

## SECOND WEEK

## For Father's Day

## St. Joseph and Fathers

*Céline Martin, younger sister of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, bore testimony to the success with which her father played the role in life which God had given him: "When I want to imagine St. Joseph," she wrote, "I think at once of my father." In St. Joseph, Christian fathers have an ideal model.*

Joseph was a father. The Gospels show him doing nothing else but being a father — working, commanding,

making decisions. We need look no further for the secret of his sanctity than this 24-hour-a-day job. Fatherhood is just that. Maybe the reason behind God's mysterious flowering of devotion to St. Joseph is to teach fathers to be Joseph-like. That is, to teach them to regain their virility, reliability, authority, and to take their rightful place as masters of the home and rulers of the family. . . .

Fatherhood is a virile calling. A father must be for his children an image of God the Father. . . . All Christ's teachings were directed toward love and reverence of the Father. And God gave us a natural way to glimpse the Father in our human fathers. It is not only in the moment of conception that a father stands in the place of God toward his child. In this moment he participates in the Father's power of creation. Throughout the entire course of life of his child he must share in God's Providence. By his love, his mercy, his justice, his exercise of authority, he must take the place of God. "All authority is from above."

Today, fatherhood is an heroic calling. Joseph must have had the same basic problems as modern fathers. Otherwise we would feel little sympathy for him. Nor would he have been worthy to have been the father of the "Man of Sorrows" had he not himself been the "Father of Sorrows."

The task of the breadwinner was never an easy one. Joseph plied his trade in an era that knew not workers' unions and guaranteed wages. Only his towering faith in God's providence could have seen him through the dark days of "flooded markets and displacement." (He was a D. P.) The roar of roadsters in the middle of the night sets the modern father's nerves on edge waiting for the screech of tires and the crash of steel. Centuries ago,

Joseph was wakened from his sleep amid the cries of slaughtered infants, and he feared for the safety of his own.

Joseph had to use his authority, too. "He went down to Nazareth and was subject to them." Without ever submitting to an I. Q. test, Joseph knew that he was infinitely inferior intellectually to his Son. But the difference in their I. Q.'s did not free him from his duty of exacting obedience from the Boy. The exercise of Joseph's fatherhood took an endless amount of physical energy, ingenuity, patience, watchfulness, love, kindness. Together it all spelled sanctity. Sanctity is the secret of all true fatherhood — a fatherly, Joseph-like sanctity.

Editorial from THE ORATORY

## JUNE

### THIRD WEEK

#### St. Joseph and Priests

***"Oh, what a Saint is the glorious St. Joseph! He is not only a patriarch, but the chief of all patriarchs; he is not simply a confessor, but more than a confessor; for in his confession is contained the dignity of bishops, the generosity of martyrs and of all other saints."***

— St. Francis de Sales

As with Mary, self-abasement was St. Joseph's grandest grace. He was conscious to himself that he was the shadow of the Eternal Father, and this knowledge overwhelmed him. With the deepest reverence, he hid himself



in the constant thought of the dignity of his office, in the profoundest self-abjection. Commanding makes deep men more humble than obeying. St. Joseph's humility was fed all through life by having to command Jesus, by being the superior of his God. The priest, who has most reason to deplore the poverty of his attainments in humility, is humble at least when he comes to consecrate at Mass. For years Joseph lived in the awful sanctity of that which to the priest is but a moment. The little house at Nazareth was as the outspread square of the white corporal. All the words he spoke were almost words of consecration. . . .

He was a priest of the Infant Jesus, neither to sacrifice Him nor to offer Him, but only to guard Him, to handle Him with reverence, and to worship Him. Like a deacon he might bear the Precious Blood, but not consecrate it. Or he was the priestly sacristan to whose custody the Tabernacle was committed. This was more his office than saying Mass. All this was in keeping with his reserve. . . .

We can give no name to the character of this sanctity. We cannot compare him with any other of the saints of God. As his office was unshared, so was his grace. It followed the peculiarities of his office. It stood alone. He was to Mary among men what Gabriel was to her among angels; but he came nearer to her than Gabriel, for he was of her nature. What St. John was to Mary after Calvary, Joseph was to her after Bethlehem; so that probably, if we could perceive it, there was an analogy between his holiness and that of the Beloved Disciple. But his sanctification is hidden in obscurity. . . . It is most certain that he was a peculiar vessel of the divine predilection, eternally predestined to a singular and incomparably sublime office, and laden with the most magnificent of graces to fit him for that office. For, wonderful

as was his office to Mary, his office to Jesus far surpassed it. . . . He stood to Jesus visibly in the place of the Eternal Father. . . . It is not possible to think of him without extreme awe, because of that shadow of identity with the Eternal Father. . . . We cannot describe his holiness, because we have no term of comparison. . . . His holiness was one of God's eternal ideas, one of those which He most cherished and kept nearest to Himself.

Frederick William Faber, BETHLEHEM

## JUNE

### FOURTH WEEK

#### Joseph, Son of David

*During His public ministry Our Lord often taught many lessons by interpreting incidents of the Old Testament in the light of His own life and actions. On the very day of His Resurrection, appearing to two disconsolate disciples on the road to Emmaus, "beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things referring to Himself." If we search the Scriptures, we can learn much, too, about St. Joseph, last of the patriarchs, son of David.*

From the fact that God allowed him to be called and thought of as father of the Divine Child, you may judge how great a man Joseph was. His very name suggests it, for Joseph means *increase*. And remember, too, the great patriarch, who once upon a time was sold into Egypt (Gen. 37:28); you must know that the later Joseph in-

herited his chastity, his innocence, and his grace, as well as his name. The first Joseph, sold through his brothers' jealousy, foreshadowed the selling of Christ by treachery; the second Joseph, seeking refuge from the jealousy of Herod, took Christ away into Egypt. The first, keeping faith with his master, refused to lie with his master's lady (Gen. 39:12); the second, respecting the maidenhood of his Lady, the Mother of his Lord, was faithful to his own chastity. The first had the gift of interpreting dreams (Gen. 40, 41); it was given to the second to know and share in heavenly mysteries. The first laid in stores of wheat, for himself and for all the people of the land of Egypt (Gen. 41:47-57); to the second was entrusted the care of the living Bread from Heaven, for himself and for the whole world. There can be no doubt that the Joseph to whom the Mother of the Saviour was betrothed was a good and faithful man; he was a "faithful and prudent servant" (Matt. 24:45), whom God raised up to be His Mother's helpmate, guardian of His own flesh, the sole and very faithful helper on earth in the great work of His Incarnation.

Add to this that he was of the family of David. Indeed was he a true son of that kingly house, noble in his descent, yet more noble in his mind. A true son of David; no degenerate offspring of his ancestor but truly a son, not simply according to the flesh but in faith, holiness, and devotion. In Joseph, as though he were another David, the Lord found a man after His own heart (cf. Acts 13:22), to whom He could safely entrust the most holy and hidden secrets. To him, as to David, God showed the hidden things of His wisdom (cf. Ps. 50:8), and gave him knowledge of a mystery that was hidden from the great ones of the earth. Lastly, it was given

to Joseph, not simply to see and hear Him whom many kings and prophets had desired to see, and saw not, desired to hear, and heard not (cf. Matt. 13:17); but as well, to carry, lead, embrace, kiss, nurture, and protect Him. We must suppose that Mary, too, was descended from the house of David, for otherwise she would not have been betrothed to a man of that house. Both, then, were of the house of David; but it was only in Mary that the promise which the Lord had sworn to David was fulfilled: Joseph was but the witness to the fulfillment of the promise.

St. Bernard, Homily MISSUS EST

## JULY

### FIRST WEEK

#### Feast of the Visitation

*In thinking of the event commemorated by the Feast of the Visitation, we are inclined to overlook the separation it entailed for St. Joseph. We forget, too, that it required an act of loving trust on Joseph's part to acquiesce to Mary's unexplained and sudden determination to visit her elderly cousin.*

When soundless voices and the hidden words  
Were gone and only evening filled the room  
With light, when sign of miracle as yet  
Moved not beyond this secret heart it chose,  
And she who was not now alone, stood lonely  
With her Own, in this, first aftertime,  
One there was who heard her speak, and looked  
More kindly and more closely than the rest.

Joseph did not need to wait for reasons  
To be here, but on this night he came  
More swiftly since her father sent for him,  
And what he kept within permitted him  
To see in her that which all the others  
Could not see. . . .

What it was he did not know.  
The light lay shaded in her eyes and dimmed,  
And only at long intervals he saw

The rise of brightness that could not be dimmed  
Nor longer held. Yet what it meant, he was  
Not sure; whether of joy or pain or both  
He could not guess, and he had lived too long  
To find distinction easy. Only this  
Was sure . . . whatever moved in her was sweet,  
And somehow there was that which made him sense  
The utter force of it, when quietly  
She spoke again about Elizabeth. . . .

The feeling moved in him again that more  
Lay hidden in her soft, repeated wish  
Than what she said, or dared to let be said.  
The depth of quick abstraction in her look,  
The light, and then the shading of the light,  
As if a sunrise sought concealing mists,  
Or such a surge and conscious ebb the mind  
Might know at what is undeserving dear.  
So, quietly, he spoke, and did not see  
The sudden movement of her gratitude  
When, favoring the journey and the haste,  
He said it good to seek Elizabeth.

John W. Lynch,  
A WOMAN WRAPPED IN SILENCE

## JULY

### SECOND WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Trustworthiness

*When we ponder deeply upon the relationship between Christ and His foster father, a paradox suggests itself. Poor, weak creatures that*

***we are, we cannot hope to offer to Christ the perfect devotion He received from St. Joseph. On the other hand, we can more nearly approximate, at least in one respect, the devotion Christ showed to St. Joseph by trusting him absolutely.***

The amount of trust that a person places in another is a good indication of the esteem he has for that individual. God the Father trusted Joseph. . . . He placed in his care His well-beloved Son and His most pure Mother. Shadow of the Eternal Father, they have called him. The shadow is not the reality, but a reflected image, a protecting shelter or cover. How exalted a position was his. Human being though he was, his duty was to be a father to God's Son and cherish God's Mother. God does nothing rashly, and when He entrusts a creature with a special work, He also equips him with the necessary dignity and grace to accomplish it. *How God trusted Joseph!* He knew his mettle, how much he would endure and how, despite all the testing, he would remain faithful to Him. God will not have trusted him in vain. Faithfully would he guard the treasures entrusted to him; humbly would he try to be worthy of this trust, forgetting himself, aware that above all, regardless of the personal suffering entailed, he must protect, cherish, and provide for Jesus and Mary.

Here the mystery is deepening: Jesus Christ, true God and true man, calling one of His creatures by the name of "father." Jesus depended on Joseph for the safety of His life, and not in vain, for Joseph saved His life when Herod sought it. Joseph carried Jesus when He was unable to walk, soothed His fears, gave advice, taught Him all that a father teaches his son. What was Joseph to

Jesus? A father, His loving foster father on earth. Jesus is our Exemplar in all things. If He loved, trusted, esteemed, and obeyed Joseph in all things, should we do less? The Creator looked to His creature for protection, guidance, comfort, help, security. What simplicity and humility, to accept the existing order of things as planned by God! Joseph loved Jesus with the love of a creature for his God. He also had for Him a father's tender love, the like of which no other can, nor ever will have. He knew Him as a Babe, a growing Boy, and a young Man. Will not one of our joys of heaven be in contemplating this beautiful relationship between father and Son, between the father who was a creature and the Son who was His father's Creator? This relationship established on earth endures in heaven, and so today, between Joseph and Jesus, the bond is the same: father and Son. What confidence should we not have, then, in going to Joseph for our needs!

Sister M. Marjorie, ST. JOSEPH

## JULY

### THIRD WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Constancy in Trial

***To study St. Joseph in the trials which befell him is to understand his nobility. Undemonstrative constancy marks him as a true prince. How admirably he illustrates the truth of St. Augustine's words: "Where there is love, there is no labor; or, if there is labor, the labor is love."***

In the contemplation of Mary's perfection, it would not do to overlook Joseph. A dogged, humble, unquestioning devotion marks all of his recorded life. The uneasiness about his wife's condition as they approached Bethlehem, the shock of the news that every place was taken, the panicky search for quarters, all this was Joseph's worry. The warning of Herod's murderous intent was given directly to Joseph; the hurried flight into Egypt was a matter for him to manage. The long return from Egypt to Nazareth was something for Joseph to plan and carry out. He faced a routine of daily drudgery that hardly brought in a living when he would have liked to lay kingdoms at the feet of his beautiful young wife.

In fact, Mary's entry into the life of Joseph was a signal for unceasing trouble. Before his espousal and marriage to the Mother of God, Joseph's life was one of serene, uneventful peace; he was a humble artisan in a tiny village completely off the trade route which was the artery feeding men's desires for power and wealth. Quite probably nothing out of the ordinary had ever happened to Joseph; his was the serene routine of quiet daily labor. But that was before Mary came. There was the immediate worry about her miraculous pregnancy, a terrible agony for one who knew Mary as Joseph did, and one that well deserved the prompt assurance of the angel to put an end to Joseph's search for an easy way out for Mary. He was rushed to the other end of the land with a wife whose time had almost come, and forced to find lodging where there were no lodgings to be found. Kings visited him and his family who had never thought to come within miles of a king. Kings pursued him and tried to put his Child to death. He was driven into exile and forced to earn substance for his family among strangers.

Mary brought trouble to Joseph, plenty of it; and he loved every instant of it. He rejoiced that he had been chosen to protect her, to give her unselfish devotion. In other words, Joseph was in love.

It is impossible to think of Joseph without loving him; he was indeed a father and we have seen his likeness on earth. For love is always a call to things above ourselves, to unquestioning sacrifice and complete consecration; it is an invitation to heroism which, somehow, we do not hesitate to answer. It is the natural parallel, in the lives of men and women of every age, of the Annunciation of the angel to Mary.

Walter Farrell, A COMPANION TO THE SUMMA

## JULY

### FOURTH WEEK

#### The Love of Joseph and Mary

*In spite of the number of artists who have depicted St. Joseph as an aged man, common sense and a knowledge of Hebrew customs convince us that, at the time of his espousal to Our Lady, Joseph was a man in his early twenties. With deft strokes Bishop Sheen has sketched the outlines of a picture that will come nearer to satisfying the imagination.*

Joseph was probably a *young* man, strong, virile, athletic, handsome, chaste, and disciplined; the kind of man one sees sometimes shepherding sheep, or piloting a plane, or working at a carpenter's bench. Instead of being

a man incapable of loving, he must have been on fire with love. Just as we would give very little credit to the Blessed Mother if she had taken her vow of virginity after having been an old maid for fifty years, so neither could we give much credit to a Joseph who became her spouse because he was advanced in years. Young girls in those days, like Mary, took vows to love God uniquely, and so did young men, of whom Joseph was one so pre-eminent as to be called the "just." Instead, then, of being dried fruit to be served on the table of the King, he was rather a blossom filled with promise and power. He was not in the evening of life but in its morning, bubbling over with energy, strength, and controlled passion.

Mary and Joseph brought to their espousals, not only their vows of virginity, but also two hearts with greater torrents of love than had ever before coursed through human breasts. No husband and wife ever loved one another so much as Joseph and Mary. . . . Love usually makes husband and wife one. In the case of Mary and Joseph, it was not their combined loves but Jesus who made them one. No deeper love ever beat under the roof of the world since the beginning, nor will it ever beat, even unto the end. They did not go to God through love of one another; rather, because they went first to God, they had a deep and pure love one for another. . . .

How much more beautiful Mary and Joseph become when we see in their loves what might be called the first Divine Romance! . . . In both Mary and Joseph, there was youth, beauty, and promise. God loves cascading cataracts and billowing waterfalls, but He loves them better, not when they overflow and drown His flowers, but when they are harnessed and bridled to light a city and to slake the thirst of a child. In Joseph and Mary, we do not find

one controlled waterfall and one dried-up lake, but rather two youths who, before they knew the beauty of the one and the handsome strength of the other, willed to surrender these things for Jesus.

Fulton J. Sheen, *THE WORLD'S FIRST LOVE*

## AUGUST

### FIRST WEEK

#### Confidence in St. Joseph

*Confidence in the intercessory power of St. Joseph rests not on any sentimental concept but rather on the theologically established fatherhood of our Saint. Hear the testimony of a revered saint and theologian on this point.*

During the time he spent with Jesus, St. Joseph was raised to such a height of holiness and merit as to surpass those of all other saints. . . .

Because of such merits, God will withhold no grace that Joseph asks for those who devoutly appeal to him. St. Bernardino adds that it cannot be doubted that in heaven Christ treats Joseph with the familiarity and respect which, as a Son to His father, He gave him when He lived on earth; rather is it now perfected. Notice those words: familiarity, respect. That Lord who on earth revered St. Joseph as His father will certainly deny him nothing that he asks in heaven. Moreover, we may add this: Joseph did not, by nature, have a father's authority over the manhood of Jesus Christ; but he did have it, in a way, as Mary's husband, for Mary, as the real Mother of Jesus, had authority over Him: he to whom the tree belongs has a right to its fruits. Therefore Jesus, when He lived on earth, respected and obeyed

Joseph as His superior; and therefore also, Jesus in heaven listens to Joseph's prayers as though they were commands.

Listen to what St. Bernard says: "Power is given to some of the saints to help in particular necessities; but to St. Joseph, power is given to help in all necessities, and to protect all who devoutly turn to him." What St. Bernard gave as his opinion St. Teresa confirmed from her own experience. "God seems to have given other saints power to help us in particular circumstances," she writes, "but I know from experience that this glorious St. Joseph helps in each and every need." We are certain of this; for as, on earth Jesus Christ was pleased to be subject to St. Joseph, so in heaven He does all that the Saint asks. So let us imagine that we hear Our Lord, when He sees us full of wretchedness and affliction, speak to us in the words that Pharaoh used to his people amidst the famine: "Go to Joseph," if you would seek consolation.

St. Alphonsus Liguori,  
SERMON FOR ST. JOSEPH'S FEAST

## AUGUST

### SECOND WEEK

#### "Go to Joseph!"

*This brief command constitutes the "last word" in devotion to St. Joseph. "Go to Joseph!" In him you will find a sure guide, an understanding friend, a devoted guardian, a loving father, an exalted model. "Go to Joseph!" He will lead you to heaven.*



Joseph, the son of the patriarch Jacob, was the figure of St. Joseph, the son of another Jacob: "Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ" (Matt. 1:16).

What was truly said of the first Joseph, as to his future, and as to his goodness, his chastity, his patience, his wisdom, his influence with the king, his power over the people, and his love for his brethren, is verified much more perfectly, even to this day, in the second Joseph.

Of old it was said to the needy and suffering people in the kingdom of Egypt: "Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you" (Gen. 41:55). The same is now said by the Sovereign Pontiff to all needy and suffering people in the kingdom of the Church: "Go to Joseph."

If you labor for your bread; if you have a family to support; . . . if your heart is searched by trials at home; if you are assailed by some importunate temptation; if your faith is sorely tested, and your hope seems lost in darkness and disappointment; if you have yet to learn to love and serve Jesus and Mary as you ought, Joseph, the head of the house, the husband of Mary, the foster father of Jesus — Joseph is your model, your teacher, and your father. Truly, in all things, St. Joseph is the people's friend. . . .

Go, then, to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you.

Go to Joseph, and obey him as Jesus and Mary obeyed him.

Go to Joseph, and speak to him as They spoke to him.

Go to Joseph, and consult him as They consulted him.

Go to Joseph, and honor him as They honored him.

Go to Joseph, and be grateful to him as They were grateful to him.

Go to Joseph, and love him as They loved him, and as They love him still.

However much you love Joseph, your love will always fall short of the extraordinary love which Jesus and Mary had for him. On the other hand, the love of Joseph necessarily leads us to Jesus and Mary. He was the first Christian to whom it was said, "Take the Child and His Mother." This led a Father of the Church to say, "You will always find Jesus with Mary and Joseph."

Herbert Vaughan, WHO IS ST. JOSEPH?

## AUGUST

### THIRD WEEK

#### The Agony of St. Joseph

*By frequently returning to ponder upon the Gospel scenes we can deepen our understanding of its mysteries and of the personalities who figure therein. One who would know St. Joseph must enter into the anguish of his heart as it is revealed in the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel.*

The Gospel begins with a tragedy of love; St. Matthew gives us a glimpse into its depths:

"Now the generation of Christ was in this wise.

"When His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost. Whereupon Joseph her husband, being a just man and not willing publicly to expose her, was minded to put her away privately.

"But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in his sleep saying: Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife. For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

"And she shall bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins. . . .

"And Joseph, rising up from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him, and took unto him his wife." (Matt. 1:18-24)

There is not a word too many or too few. In one movement we are brought to the heart of the mystery; just so it had suddenly confronted Joseph. But we know what the issue was, and Joseph at that time did not.

He loved Mary. From the first moment of their first meeting he had felt that she was unique and that God was entrusting her to him. Was he now called upon to sacrifice her, as Abraham had had to steel himself to the immolation of Isaac?

The wound in his heart was immeasurable. The plain fact was there. No denial, no tenderness, could alter it. Her very innocence made his anguish more poignant. Another must be guilty, who should take the responsibility for what he had done.

Joseph could not speak of it to her since she had chosen to be silent. Any word would have been an outrage. Silence, his silence, should give him back his liberty, for it attested his utter confidence in her.

Thus he came to his decision. And he slept the sleep that relaxes the body but not the soul's pain. . . .

It was then that the angel intervened:

"Joseph" — he touches him lightly as a sleeping child — "son of David" — heir of the promise which shall be fulfilled in you — "fear not to take Mary" — whose name breathes the freshness and the joy of all the dawns — "thy wife" — the title which has made her forever yours in the sight of God — "for that which is conceived in her" — thus the jubilation of all the Christmas days to come resounds first in you — "is of the Holy Spirit" — who is the eternity of love in the eternity of being.

And he took her to him.

Maurice Zundel, OUR LADY OF WISDOM

## AUGUST

### FOURTH WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Obedience

*Human nature, which has been infected with virulent pride, finds obedience a difficult virtue to practice. No wonder that in the Old Testament we read: "The obedient man shall speak of victory." The victory over pride constitutes the holiness of the saints. In the practice of this virtue St. Joseph sets a glorious example.*

St. Joseph always maintained his self-possession, he was always quiet, gentle, and persevering in his acceptance of God's good pleasure, to which he completely abandoned himself. For he was "a just man," and so his will was at all times attuned, conformed, and united to the will of God.

That is what makes the just, the righteous, man: perfect harmony with God's will in all circumstances, whether

agreeable or adverse. It cannot be doubted that this was Joseph's constant state. Look at the examples we have. The angel sends him this way and that: he tells him he must go into Egypt, and Joseph goes; that he must go back, and he goes back. God wills that he shall always be poor, which is one of the heaviest burdens that He can put on us; Joseph submits lovingly, and not for a time but for all his days. And what poverty!

The voluntary poverty undertaken by monks and nuns and other religious is easy enough, for it allows them to accept and use the necessities of life. But the poverty of St. Joseph, of Our Lord and His Mother, was not like that. It was indeed voluntary, inasmuch as they loved it dearly, but for all that it was a very real, extreme and trying poverty; Joseph was only a humble carpenter, and certainly he was not able to earn so much that his family had all they needed, even though he worked so hard and lovingly to provide for them. But in spite of that he went on humbly accepting God's will that his poverty and modest condition should continue, without letting himself be in any degree overcome by the inner weariness that doubtless often assailed him. Rather did he stand firm in his submission to God which, like all his other virtues, continued to increase and to become more perfect. So, too, Our Lady grew in virtue and perfection day by day, through her most blessed Son (who from the moment of His conception was what He will be to eternity), and thus He made the family into which He was born increase continually in all holiness. Mary owed her perfection to His divine goodness, and Joseph... received his through her.

St. Francis de Sales, 19TH CONFERENCE

## SEPTEMBER

### FIRST WEEK

#### A Prayer for Labor Day

*The great pontiff of blessed memory, Pius XII, composed a special prayer to St. Joseph, Patron of Workers, to which is attached an indulgence of three years under the usual conditions.*

O glorious Patriarch St. Joseph, humble and honest workman of Nazareth, to all Christians, but especially to us, you have given the example of a life of perfection, a life unremitting in toil, a life lived in blessed union with Mary and Jesus. Help us, as Catholic workmen, to find in our daily tasks a means of giving glory to God, of increasing in holiness, of being useful to our fellow men. These are the high ideals which underlie our lives.

O most beloved protector, obtain for us from the Lord humility and singleness of heart, love of our work and of those who work with us. May we be ready to accept God's will and to obey His voice amidst all those inescapable difficulties which beset us in life. May we bear our trials gladly, in awareness of our special mission among men, and in recognition of our own responsibility. Grant us the spirit of discipline and of prayer. May we be dutiful and respectful before authority; may we love our fellows as brethren; may we care in charity and in patience for those who are entrusted to us. Be at our side when we prosper, so that we may enjoy the results of our work. Be with us

also in those doleful hours when heaven seems to shut itself off from us, when the very instruments of our work seem to rebel in our hands.

Just as were your own, may our eyes be fixed on Mary, our Mother, your own sweet spouse, where she sits spinning in a quiet corner of your tiny shop, as a gentle smile lights up her face. Fix our gaze on Jesus as He works with you at the carpenter's bench. May we thus lead a holy and peaceful life here below, in preparation for the everlasting happiness that awaits us in heaven. Amen.

Pope Pius XII,

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH THE WORKMAN

## SEPTEMBER

### SECOND WEEK

#### St. Joseph the Carpenter

*To realize that work is a blessing, not a curse, is to have taken a long stride upon the path of peace. Workers striving to imitate the example of St. Joseph, who labored strenuously and patiently, ever in the company of his Foster Son, will earn the respect of their fellow men and will enjoy the blessing of Christ, the Prince of Peace.*

There is overwhelming evidence from early tradition to show that Joseph in his position as foster father of Jesus was a woodworker. . . . St. Ephrem in attractive poetic style addresses Christ thus: "You are the Son of the living God; so, too, are You the Son of dying man. You are the Son of the Creator by whose will the world grew

out of nothing; so, too, are You the Son of Joseph. He was a carpenter in whom You Yourself first infused skill. Through You, not however taught by You, the Parent of all things created His framework. By Your finger the Supreme Craftsman brought together all things. In like manner Joseph carried out his work under Your tutelage, You whom he had in his presence as his Master. O Son of the Creator, You who are also Son of the carpenter, who when You were constructing the framework of the world were referring everything to the hidden mystery of the cross, perchance in that very house of Joseph the thought of the cross never left Your heart."

Joseph was a laboring man, probably in moderate circumstances. The honorable position he held in life was exceptionally honorable in view of the dignity to which it was raised by Christ's participation in it. . . . Work makes man's life happy on earth, and Joseph ever so clearly illustrated this. In him appeared the dignity of labor, and particularly the value of all work done in a spirit of faith for the intention of pleasing our loving Father in heaven.

In early literature there appears a fleeting reference to the title whereby Joseph was to be worthily designated in far-distant ages as the Patron of Workmen. St. Augustine holds up Joseph to monks as a model of industry, pointing out that "that just man chosen to be a witness of perpetual conjugal virginity, he to whom was espoused the Virgin Mary who brought forth Christ, was a carpenter." St. John Chrysostom, too, defends the essential dignity of Joseph in his words of rebuke to the Jews who condemned Jesus because of His apparent descent from a craftsman: "Since there are many examples from earlier times of those who were born of humble fathers but

became eminent by their works" — for example, David, Amos, and Moses — "they should have marveled that one of common extraction could speak in so sublime a manner. In this was it apparent that His sublimity did not come from human effort but from divine grace."

Francis L. Filas, THE MAN NEAREST TO CHRIST

## SEPTEMBER

### THIRD WEEK

#### St. Joseph, Patron of Refugees

*For the hunted, the homeless, the persecuted, St. Joseph's remembering heart burns with compassion. He too was once a refugee; he too was pursued, and knew the terror of fleeing through the night, of leaving one's native land to escape what would be harder to bear than death. No wonder he would hear a refugee's prayer!*

The night lies bright on the land, the sweet stars across it, though as yet no moon. So peaceful a night for there to be men and dogs waiting for us on the dike four hours away. . . . We get up and start on. Then out comes the full moon, shining on the fields and glistening off little ridges of snow that cling to the soil, and making the country all beautiful now, to be leaving. Where is the pain to compare with leaving one's land, and in such a way? . . .

We walk on steadily then. It is approaching midnight, and we have walked over three hours when sud-

denly we see, in the far-off distance and rising up out of the moonlit fields, the black form of it: the dike. . . .

From above, the moon shines down so brightly we can see each other almost to the color of a person's eyes. More and more we all feel a consciousness of that moon. Surely, we feel, it is impossible under that moon for one person, let alone nineteen, to get across the dike without being seen.

"It's too bright," I hear Big Jo Jo mutter from right in front of me.

I think: "So what can I do about it? Did I make the moon come out?"

"That moon is no good," Jo Jo says.

"Do I control the moon?" I think.

"I absolutely don't like it," Jo Jo says.

"I'll ask St. Joseph about it," I think.

"The guards can see from a great distance," Jo Jo says.

Then I remember St. Joseph himself was once in a situation very similar to ours. So I speak to him, under my breath, but very straight.

"Big Jo Jo says the moon is too bright. Can't you make it a little darker? Do you remember when you were told to take little Jesus and His mother by night into Egypt to escape Herod? Do you remember that you fled across the border exactly like us? And how Herod didn't catch you? So you should help us the same way you got help when you were running. All we are asking is what you got yourself. Isn't that fair? You felt very happy about it when you didn't get caught. I'd like to feel happy, too."

And I pat St. Joseph through my coat, where he is sewed in the hem.

We are going forward very slowly all the time, but still are some distance from the dike. Then once more

we stop and squat in the fields. In the moonlight I can see Big Jo Jo's face all worried.

Then suddenly I am looking at Big Jo Jo's face, and I cannot see it nearly so well.

I looked around and the forms of the others are not nearly so clear. And we all look up at the sky and are startled.

A kind of fog is passing across the sky and across the big full moon.

"Ah," says Big Jo Jo, like a sigh all through him. "Ah, ah, ah. It is much better now."

And we wait awhile longer, and the fog gets thicker, so that we cannot see the moon at all, and the night becomes very dark, almost to blackness. And the dike we cannot see at all.

I know that fogs sometimes come up very suddenly in the dike country of Slovakia, and especially at this time of year. That is nothing in the least unusual. However, it is true that the Lord controls the elements, too, and once He parted the Red Sea. Maybe this is one of the usual fogs that comes up. Am I somebody to say where the fog comes from?

However, through my coat I pat and I pat St. Joseph.

William Brinkley,  
THE DELIVERANCE OF SISTER CECILIA

## SEPTEMBER

### FOURTH WEEK

#### St. Joseph the Wonder-Worker

*Among the Old Testament stories the account of Joseph of Egypt possesses an unusual fas-*

*cination. It is a story of intrigue, adventure, romance, success, and above all magnanimous love and generosity. When all the land was ravaged by famine, the king bade his people one after another: "Go to Joseph!" Thus is prefigured Joseph of Nazareth. The King of heaven bids us all: "Go to Joseph!" There is no limit to what he can obtain from God for his needy, God-fearing clients.*

We are reminded many times daily of St. Joseph, in sickness and health, in bodily as well as spiritual need. He will find work and a home, a husband or a wife, if that is God's will. He is close to the earth and to physical toil. He knows we are made of body as well as soul and that we are but dust, and that we need all the help we can get. So he answers us. Sometimes it is funny how directly he does it.

There was that day when all of us at Maryfarm, Easton, decided to give him a present instead of asking him for one, on his feast day, March 19, as St. Teresa of Avila always suggested. "Let's give him all the money that's sent in to us today," we said. It was pretty much of a gesture, because it is seldom that money is sent to the farm, but always to the city, to St. Joseph's House of Hospitality there. But who knows, we said, someone might give us a present which we in turn could hand over to St. Joseph for some of his missionaries. He is the Patron of the Universal Church.

The mail came, and letter after letter fell out of the huge envelope which the mailman had brought, addressed to the farm by David Mason who was in charge of the house in New York at the time. He too was celebrating St. Joseph's feast. As a gesture in honor of St. Joseph, and to act as a St. Joseph to us, he was sending all the

mail that came in that day in response to our spring appeal so that we would have the fun of opening it and using it on St. Joseph's day to pay bills with. Father Pacifique Roy was with us then, and since he too was one of St. Joseph's missionaries, belonging to the Congregation of St. Joseph, he loved the feast. His favorite sermon used to be about sowing and reaping. "Sow sparingly, and ye will reap sparingly," he used to say warningly.

Well, we had an opportunity to sow that day. We opened the mail, shouting with joy and also with dismay. We were going to give away more than we had bargained for. Our own grocery bill was high, we needed lumber to mend the roof of the chapel unless we wanted to continue to sit through Mass with an umbrella over our heads. And here was St. Joseph taking the money away from us instead of sending it to us. He was taking us at our word.

Six hundred dollars came in that memorable day, and we divided it into three parts and sent it out to three needy groups of missionaries. We thought Father Roy looked rather rueful as he separated the dollar bills into neat piles. "A hundredfold," he said, to himself as much as to us. "A hundredfold is what we are promised. This is the supernatural way to make money. What is one hundred times six hundred? St. Joseph will get the roof fixed yet."

Dorothy Day, ST. JOSEPH THE WONDER-WORKER

## OCTOBER

### FIRST WEEK

#### St. Joseph and the Holy Rosary

*If St. Joseph holds a shadowy place in our devotional life, we can set about correcting this during October, the Month of the Holy Rosary. During the recitation of the joyful mysteries, let us note particularly the prominent, though quiet, role he plays in each scene. Let us ask him, as we meditate upon these mysteries, for five graces: devotion to Mary, fidelity to prayer, love of poverty, obedience, and confidence in God.*

All of us have a rosary which we love. St. Joseph had a rosary which he lived. Often we hear regret expressed because the Gospels give us such a meager account of the life of St. Joseph, but the Evangelists have associated him very intimately with the five episodes which we have come to love and cherish as the Five Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary.

St. Joseph was a man of joy. By trade he was a carpenter. He knew the joy which attends the completion of a piece of work which has demanded patient, laborious effort combined with skill. He knew the pleasure which the feel of timber, the pungent odor of seasoned wood, the rustling of shavings, brings. His heart had often known the calm joy occasioned by a neighbor's satisfied acceptance of a spinning wheel, a chair, a table or chest which he had made upon order. His occupation provided



him with quiet hours when, alone in his workshop, he could recall the prophecies about the Messiah and offer silent prayer that the time of His coming might be hastened.

Joseph, son of David, was the legal husband of Mary, whom we salute as "Cause of our joy." Certainly, she was first of all cause of St. Joseph's joy! Who can imagine the happiness which must have flooded — save for one brief period — the heart of this simple Nazarene each time he sat down to a meal which Mary had prepared for him? The pleasure that was his each time he came in from his workshop and found her busy about her domestic tasks? How blessed he felt each time he joined her in the ritual prayers which were an essential feature of each Jewish household?

St. Joseph knew the unspeakable joy of living in closest intimacy with and physical proximity to Christ, the Son of God. His heart thrilled as this Baby, whom all recognized as the carpenter's son, learned to call him "Father." He knew the joy which his protective responsibility for the Boy's welfare brought him: when he extracted a sliver from the Hand which one day would be nailed to a plank of wood; when he gave instructions for the handling of the carpenter's tools to Him whose Fingers had fashioned the universe; when he taught the hallowed formulas of prayer to Him who would one day teach all men to invoke God as "Our Father"; when he exercised a parent's authority over the Child who went down to Nazareth and was subject to him — all these days and years constituted a foretaste of heavenly joy, and though seasoned by elements of the sorrow that over-

shadows all earthly joy, marked him pre-eminently as the Saint of the Joyful Mysteries.

Sister Emily Joseph, ST. JOSEPH'S ROSARY

## OCTOBER

### SECOND WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Power of Intercession

*One may well despair of imitating the great St. Teresa of Avila, either in the extraordinary reform of Carmel which she directed or in the sublimity of her mystical union with God. In one respect, however, each of us can and should imitate her. This is her absolute confidence in St. Joseph and the tenderness of her devotion to him.*

For when I found that, while still so young, I was so seriously paralysed, and that earthly doctors had been unable to cure me, I resolved to seek a cure from heavenly doctors...

I took for my advocate and lord the glorious St. Joseph and commended myself earnestly to him; and I found that this, my father and lord, delivered me both from this trouble and also from other and greater troubles concerning my honour and the loss of my soul, and that he gave me greater blessings than I could ask of him. I do not remember even now that I have ever asked anything of him which he has failed to grant. I am astonished at the great favours which God has bestowed on me through this blessed Saint, and at the perils from which

He has freed me, both in body and in soul. To other saints the Lord seems to have given grace to succour us in some of our necessities, but of this glorious Saint my experience is that he succours us in them all and that the Lord wishes to teach us that as He was Himself subject to him on earth (for, being His guardian and being called His father, he could command Him), just so in heaven He still does all that he asks. This has also been the experience of other persons whom I have advised to commend themselves to him; and even today there are many who have great devotion to him through having newly experienced this truth. . . .

I wish I could persuade everyone to be devoted to this glorious Saint, for I have great experience of the blessings which he can obtain from God. I have never known anyone to be truly devoted to him and render him particular services who did not notably advance in virtue, for he gives very real help to souls who commend themselves to him. For some years now, I think, I have made some request of him every year on his festival and I have always had it granted. If my petition is in any way ill directed, he directs it aright for my greater good. . . .

I only beg, for the love of God, that anyone who does not believe me will put what I say to the test, and he will see by experience what great advantages come from his commending himself to this glorious Patriarch and having devotion to him. Those who practise prayer should have a special affection for him always. I do not know how anyone can think of the Queen of the Angels, during the time that she suffered so much with the Child Jesus, without giving thanks to St. Joseph for the way he helped them. If anyone cannot find a master to teach him how to pray, let him take this glorious Saint as his master and

he will not go astray. May the Lord grant that I have not erred in venturing to speak of him; for though I make public acknowledgment of my devotion to him, in serving and imitating him I have always failed. He was true to his own nature when he cured my paralysis and gave me the power to rise and walk; and I am following my own nature in using this favour so ill.

St. Teresa of Avila, AUTOBIOGRAPHY

## OCTOBER

### THIRD WEEK

#### The Seven Sorrows of St. Joseph

*In the pattern of every life, the threads of sorrow are interwoven with the threads of joy. That we might skillfully handle these sorrows and fashion them into an artistic and edifying design, the Evangelists were inspired to portray the valiant figure of St. Joseph, whose role in the divine plan of the Incarnation imposed upon him overwhelming sorrows.*

The few passages in the Gospel narratives in which St. Joseph appears present to us episodes of anguish and sorrow matched in no other human life, except that of Christ and of Our Lady. The explanation of their singular poignancy lies in the fact that each sorrow had as its focal point the glorious Son of God.

Review these seven sorrowful incidents in St. Joseph's life: his anguish of heart after his espousal to Our Lady when she was found to be with child; his grief

at being able to find no shelter but a stable at the time of Christ's birth; his pain as he beheld the knife which was to draw the first drops of the Precious Blood at the circumcision; the thrust of the double-edged sword of Simeon's prophecy, which foretold the future sufferings of the two whom St. Joseph cherished more than life itself; his distress when he had to oblige Mary to take flight to escape the murderous designs of Herod; his fear, on the return from Egypt, of the reaction of the new king, Archelaus, and his uncertainty as to the wisest course of action; his inconceivable heartache during the agonizing period of search when the Christ Child was lost in Jerusalem.

Each incident, however painful, formed part of God's design for His Incarnate Son. The prophets had foretold the virgin birth of the Messiah, had designated Bethlehem as His birthplace, and had said that "He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23). In both the circumcision and the presentation in the Temple, the Holy Family were obeying prescriptions of the Mosaic Law. Christ's own answer to His Mother's quiet rebuke in the Temple after His absence of three days indicated clearly that His parents' pain was inseparable from His conformity with His Father's will.

Grace is often spoken of as a "light" in the soul. "In your light we see light," says the Psalmist (Ps. 35: 10). St. Joseph's fidelity to grace brought him the gift of understanding, which enabled him to see in each painful episode of his life the mystery of the divine dispensation. In each of his sorrows the Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, brought him divine comfort.

Sister Emily Joseph, REFLECTING ON ST. JOSEPH

## OCTOBER

### FOURTH WEEK

#### St. Joseph, Model of the Interior Life

*At baptism, the soul of the Christian becomes a temple of the Holy Ghost. This divine Guest continues to dwell within the soul which remains in the state of grace. To be aware of this indwelling of the Holy Spirit and to cultivate devotion to Him is to grow in the interior life. St. Joseph points the way.*

St. Joseph is called the most obscure among the saints. There is good reason for this remark. His exterior life passes along in obscurity, and his interior life, in which the Saint is great and unique, is essentially darkness and shadow. . . .

He was not a light beaming into our eyes, but rather an all-pervading fragrance which all who come near it perceive without knowing its source. And so the fragrance of his interior virtues, as the model of the interior life, continues to pervade the Church of God. Such was his personal greatness, and such it had to be. What in reality would he have been without this interior life but an empty, passing shadow, a mere nothing before God and man, like the rich and great ones of earth, of whom Holy Scripture says that on awaking they "found nothing in their hands" (Ps. 75:6). St. Joseph was rich before God in his hidden life. Such is truly the manner of God's greatness itself. God is hidden, silent, interior, and invisible to us just because He is God and is, therefore, infinitely happy in and through Himself. We participate in

this greatness of God by entering into the interior life, which is essentially a life for God and in God. In this life dwells purity of heart because of intimate converse with God, the mirror of purity; in this life are true riches, because what we do is done for God and becomes pure gold for eternity; in this life strength of soul abounds because grace, which springs from this union with God, is able to conquer the dangers and difficulties of the exterior life. Let us enter upon the way of the interior life under the guidance of St. Joseph, by practicing it faithfully, by a calm attention to our interior advancement, by a persevering renewal of a good intention in all our actions, by the practice of prayer and docility to the interior inspirations of God. Without the practice of the interior life, the most hidden life would remain a merely external existence without value and meaning for God and eternity. There is no better guide to the promised land of the interior life than St. Joseph. To be a citizen of and a great man in this kingdom is the peculiar property of our Saint's holiness and the rich reward he merited by his services during the infancy of Jesus.

Moritz Meschler, ST. JOSEPH

## NOVEMBER

### FIRST WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Place in Heaven

*Even learned theologians stand bewildered, amazed, speechless, before the exalted dignity of St. Joseph. His devoted clients yearn to proclaim his greatness; yet, silence and imitation of his undemonstrative life and of his sublime love for Jesus and Mary seem to be the fitting tribute to the dear foster father of the Son of God.*

Well may we exclaim at your wholly wonderful greatness, Joseph! What an unexampled distinction! — the Mother of God, the Queen of heaven, the Mistress of the world, vouchsafed to call you her master. I do not know which excites the more wonder — Mary's humility or Joseph's exaltedness. But both are surpassed beyond compare by the Child Jesus, who is blessed unto everlasting and yet it is written of Him that He was subject to them: He who created the sun and its uprising was subject to a carpenter; He to whom every knee must bend in heaven, on earth, and under the earth was subject to a woman working at her loom.

I wish I had the words to explain a mystery so deep and hidden from the world, this astonishing and worshipful trinity of Jesus and Joseph and Mary. I am able to wish but I have not the power to perform; my efforts fail. So, since grace and glory do not do away with nature but

raise and perfect it, let us with religious devotion consider this: By the natural bond that unites a family, the Son Jesus is beholden to His mother, the Mother to her husband, and both Son and Mother to the faithful, vigilant, and unfailing guardian and provider, Joseph; and he was the head of Mary and so had a measure of authority over her just as she, by right of natural motherhood, had over her Son Jesus. How great, then, must Joseph now be in his heavenly glory, since he was singled out for such greatness in this vale of tears here on earth! If Jesus spoke truly when He said, "Where I am, there also shall My servant be" (John 12:26), surely he who, after Mary, was closest to Him on earth, who was so dutiful and faithful in his service of Him, must have a place nearest to Him in heaven.

Jean Gerson, Sermon at the  
Council of Constance, 1416

## NOVEMBER

### SECOND WEEK

#### St. Joseph's Silence

*Sometimes St. Joseph is called "the man nobody knows." Those who come to know him find him an unending source of grace and knowledge. To know him, one must talk to him — and listen to him.*

Recently St. Joseph and I got really acquainted. It happened at first quite naturally. There is a big statue of him in our little church, and since our good pastor allotted Eddie and me the second pew from the front,

and right before St. Joseph, I naturally, seeing him so close, talked things over with him.

Simple things, like begging him to get money for this winter's wood. Asking him for help about that house we wanted to rent. Was it good? Would it stand the wear and tear of many people in it; remember, it was over 115 years old. What kind of stove to get for Eddie's den and where to beg it. For after all, St. Joseph was a carpenter, and a husbandman, so it seemed quite natural to run to him with all these household problems.

But little by little I discovered a strange thing: that when I was done with my needs, I still lingered at the feet of St. Joseph. Neither of us saying a word, silence wrapping us up, like a warm, cozy mantle. Yes, St. Joseph was teaching me SILENCE. Teaching it to me simply, easily, by being companionably silent himself, yet showing me how warm and friendly silence was.

How it relaxed tense, busy nerves and thoughts. How it led to God. I felt as if St. Joseph and I were on a little river boat drifting slowly on the calm waters of silence ever closer to Christ the Lord, his Foster Son.

Yes, St. Joseph was teaching me silence. First the silence of peace, then the silence of love, where a human soul was listening at long last to the words of God. For a long time I have tried to practice this silence, but it took God's guardian to teach me.

But he did more. Slowly, he, the Patron of the Universal Church, showed me her needs. Explained to me that I, a sinner and a nobody, could and should busy myself about her, my Mother. That she was wounded, persecuted, and sick in so many places in the world, that it was high time that I took a hand in helping her, by prayer, and penance, and offering my life up day by day

with all its sorrows and joys, its work and its leisure, for that intention.

"Paterfamilias," he opened my eyes to the oneness of the Catholic Family, the Mystical Body of Christ, and made me see that I was an integral part of it, was my brother's keeper, and that again it was up to me to restore, bind wounds, nurse, and pray for all!

Suddenly in the great and holy silence of St. Joseph, so many things became clear. Caritas — Love — shone with a new beauty. And her fire flared up in my weary soul all over again. Forgotten were the pains and sorrows of the apostolate, forgotten and shrunken were the little persecutions, difficulties, misunderstanding, loneliness. . . . Nothing remained but the blinding, brilliant light, that showed my soul so clearly that whatever I ever had done for Christ's sake, was but a drop compared to what He had done for me.

Out of St. Joseph's silence, zeal leaped like a flame and caught me up, lifting me ever higher, higher . . . until all the sorrow of the world, all the joy of the world seemed to pour into my soul. And I knew that there was much to be done about repairing my Father's House.

Yet neither the fire of charity nor the flames of zeal were in the least disturbing. There was a great simplicity in them, a great and holy peace. For St. Joseph's silent lessons showed, too, that the fabric of charity and zeal was made of homey things. Of a house run with order. Of meals made with love and care. Of bread baked with joy and a song. Of prayers said regularly and without failing. Of days that were begun in God and in Him ended.

Of gentleness and patience with the poor, and a deep reverence for them and their sorrows. Of silence under

provocation. Of silence under unjust accusations. Of faith in darkness. Of making a cup of one's hands and lifting up the little daily tasks and difficulties, smiles and tears — to the Lord. Yes, I did not even notice how my conversations with St. Joseph turned first into the strange, peaceful silence of companionship, then the great silence of God, then the silence of new spiritual knowledge, then the silence of joy.

But I wanted to tell you about it, for maybe you, like myself, have not been paying enough attention to the man who lived with Christ for thirty long years, whom Christ obeyed, and loved, and who was His guardian and His Mother's. Because if you are of that forgetful majority, arise now and go to St. Joseph, and learn to be silent. For then he will tell all that you ever need and want to know. He will take you by the hand — and really make you a member of the Holy Family — and all your crooked and hard paths will be smoothed out for you — and you will walk from earth to heaven on the beautiful paths of zeal and love. Try it and see.

Catherine De Hueck Doherty,  
ST. JOSEPH AS I SEE HIM

## NOVEMBER

### THIRD WEEK

#### Patron of a Happy Death

*It is probably as Patron of a Happy Death that St. Joseph is most frequently invoked, and rightly so. At that moment each child of*

***Adam needs a father's loving support. Those who in life cultivate a tender devotion to their father and protector St. Joseph will experience his reassuring assistance at the moment of death.***

Man's necessities and sufferings on earth are many and manifold. One such trial is the lot of all. We all belong to the confraternity of death, just as we all are subject to sin. Death is the sad penalty of sin; no one escapes it. . . .

At such an hour it is truly an important matter to have a kind patron who will aid and console us, and who can furnish us the means to die a good, edifying, peaceful, and holy death. Hardly a better patron than St. Joseph could be found; for what deathbed was ever as beautiful as his must have been? All the conditions necessary to render his departure from earth a most happy and consoling one were united there. The past showed the Saint a life of innocence and purity; a life of the most genuine and sublime virtue; a life of untold merit in the service of Jesus, of Mary, of the Church, and of the whole of mankind; a life of labor, fatigue, and suffering, borne in the spirit of patience, of faith, and with the noblest love. This retrospect gave him no cause for regret or fear, but all was full of hope. We learn from his life what his death was. Does not everything combine to render his death, not only good, but consoling and even joyful? He died in the arms of Jesus, his Son and God, and in the arms of Mary; both, especially at that moment, compensated all his endeavors for them with unheard-of graces. They were helpers and consolers who not only supported his frail body but who, with powerful, soothing graces, refreshed and rejoiced the heart and soul of

the dying Saint, while the Holy Ghost replenished him with a heaven of consolation and joy. . . . There was something extraordinarily grand and majestic in his departure from life, like the quiet effulgence of the setting sun, which at the end of a day's work gazes back with rapturous joy on all it has accomplished, and quietly sinks to rest in the bosom of God. There exists no more precious masterpiece of grace, no incense more fragrant before the Lord, than the death of a saint. . . .

St. Joseph obtains for us a happy, trustful, and consoling death by our devotion to him. . . .

Hence it is well for us frequently to recommend our last hour to St. Joseph. He will not be wanting to his clients on that important occasion. How happy we shall be to have St. Joseph close our eyes in death!

Moritz Meschler, ST. JOSEPH

## NOVEMBER

### FOURTH WEEK

#### St. Joseph and the Joys of Home

***Thanksgiving Day provides Americans with an opportunity to express their gratitude to God for His bounteous gifts of home and homeland. For St. Joseph, every day was a day of thanksgiving for the treasures, Jesus and Mary, who transformed his home into a veritable heaven on earth.***

Joseph's home would be his refuge in the evenings and on holidays; for the rest, like most men, he would spend his days at his trade, and the artisans of his day



did not have their shops in their own homes. Mary and the Child would have the house to themselves for the long length of the working day, while Joseph ruled over the shop. His work demanded and developed strong hands and an eye for the perfection of line, plane, angle; for the true artisan detects the hidden beauty in rough material and unveils it with a skillfulness that is not far from tenderness. . . .

The end of the long day's labors would bring Mary and Joseph together, grateful for the respite of the cool quiet of the evening. In warm weather, those precious hours of family intimacy that give meaning to all the rest of the day would be spent on the flat top of the little house, the beauty of plain and mountains spread out as gifts of the beneficent God, the clear closeness of the sky a reminder of His protecting love. It was then that Joseph would be told of the Child's day, for Mary would hardly hide from him the details so dear to Joseph's fatherly love; indeed her own heart would look forward to these hours which offered her the only opportunity in all the long day to release the pent-up joy and love of her own heart. There was no other in all Nazareth but Joseph who shared the King's secret, and it was not Mary's to make that secret known. These are the hours, consecrated by the utterly unselfish and mutual love of the child, that open the eyes of husband and wife to the heights of nobility in each other, the hours, then, for the deepening, widening, heightening of the mutual love that makes them one. To Joseph here in the evening, Mary's flaming sanctity would light up her every act, her smiles, her least gesture, her face in repose, to make of them a fire warming a man to his very depths and spurring him on to much more than his very best; while the quiet strength,

the patient routine, the unobtrusive labors of Joseph would make more plain to Mary the fineness of the man and the reckless generosity of his love, more plain even than in the days of her espousals, of Bethlehem, and of Egypt.

Walter Farrell, ONLY SON

## DECEMBER

### FIRST WEEK

#### The Exalted Position of St. Joseph

*One who relegates St. Joseph to a shadowy corner or who fails to render him a constant tribute of honor and love has not yet acquired the habit of thinking with the Church. This great Saint occupies a central place in the story of the Incarnation. He should occupy a central place in the spiritual life of each of the redeemed.*

If you really want to know the rank of St. Joseph, turn to the Bible. But first understand the spirit of the Bible, how it does not braid bright adjectives or paint words with the rouge of rhetoric or send off every sentence with a feather in its cap and a gold chain jingling round its neck. As a rule the Scripture is as simple as stone. On Good Friday you may hear a sermon that turns Calvary into technicolor with splashing blood and silver tears. The Bible says simply, "They crucified Him." And that is the way it was with St. Joseph. All the Bible says about him is, he was "a just man." But in the Bible's sense "just" means holy and (as far as human nature can reach it) perfect. "Just" is a jeweler's tray sparkling with the gem of each virtue. "Just" is posing behind a man's head the golden halo of sainthood.

Ask Almighty God Himself what He thinks of St. Joseph. He will not answer you literally, but if we can

judge by what happened, once Almighty God bent over the balcony of heaven and saw all men who would ever live go swinging past His throne. Moses, the meekest of men, was there; and Solomon, the wisest, and Job, the most patient; patriarchs like Jacob, prophets like John the Baptist, Apostles like Peter; but — think of it! — God let them all go by, and His finger touched *this* man! Of all men, He chose as the protector of His Son Jesus and as the spouse of Mary, the humble, humdrum, commonplace carpenter St. Joseph.

Ask the Church what she thinks of St. Joseph. And she would reply that in twenty centuries she has seen all sorts of saints. Saints who were martyrs, saints who were virgins, saints who were abbots, saints who were kings — but when it came to choosing from among the countless figures in the dazzling court of heaven a guardian for the three hundred million of the Church's world-wide family, she went back to the guardian of the Holy Family of three, St. Joseph. As if she had said, you Irish may honor your St. Patrick, and you Germans your St. Boniface, and you French your Joan of Arc, and you Italians your St. Anthony; and so on — but when it comes to the official Patron of the whole Universal Church, there is no one but St. Joseph!

Ask the popes what they think of St. Joseph, and find that Pius IX has in a way spoken for them all. You may have heard how one day a celebrated artist came to him with the preliminary sketch of a huge painting. It was to portray Pius IX solemnly proclaiming the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. "See, Holy Father, you will be in the foreground, reading the parchment. Around you will spread the bishops and cardinals in their robes like

a red sunset. Up above in pearly clouds of glory will be Our Lord and Our Lady and angels and archangels." "Yes," said the Pope, "but where is St. Joseph?" "Oh, er, St. Joseph. We'll put St. Joseph over here." And the artist pointed to a corner of the picture where tiny cherubim were tumbling down like paratroopers. The Pope laid his strong finger on the center of the picture. "You will put St. Joseph here," he said quietly, "next to Jesus and Mary. That is where he was on earth, and that is where he is in heaven."

Joseph E. Manton, SAWDUST HALO

## DECEMBER

### SECOND WEEK

#### St. Joseph, Spouse of Mary Immaculate

*Wounded human nature is particularly susceptible to assaults upon the virtue of purity. Satan knows this well, and he cleverly employs his diabolical wiles in order to undermine this virtue. St. Joseph stands ready to assist those who appeal to him for protection.*

Joseph's close relation with the august Virgin was another source of great graces for him. His marriage with her was a virginal one: in it there was a mutual donation of virginity. Mary committed hers to Joseph as a treasure for him to guard, to protect and reverence. There was a reciprocal surrender on Joseph's part. These two holy spouses were bound together by a deep and pure and chaste conjugal affection, which sprang from the love each

bore to the other's purity. To this marriage Mary brought a dowry composed, not of the riches of this world, but of the treasures of grace. From the moment of the Incarnation Mary entered into her office of Dispensatrix of Divine Grace. To whom ought she to impart in greater abundance these treasures of which she had the keeping, than to him to whom she stood in such a close and intimate relation and to whom she was so much indebted? What saint can claim to have had Mary in his debt? Yet this claim can be vindicated with justice by St. Joseph. Mary owed much to him for the care, the providence, and the affection with which he enveloped her and the Child she brought him. To be chosen to play the part of spouse of Mary, the Virgin of virgins and the Mother of God, there was already needed an extraordinary purity and sanctity: to sustain worthily and unfalteringly that lofty role, there was needed a continuous stream of exceptional graces. Since Mary had the privilege of dispensing all those graces, she must have given them with the utmost generosity to her holy spouse. Everything in this marriage was spiritual and perfect—and since in perfect marriage there is a complete reciprocal donation of goods between spouse and spouse, there must have been given to Joseph in the way of graces all that was in Mary's power to obtain for any creature.

Edward Leen, IN THE LIKENESS OF CHRIST

## DECEMBER

## THIRD WEEK

## St. Joseph the Peacemaker

*By faith we realize that the Christ who comes to us in Holy Communion is the same Christ whom St. Joseph knew so intimately at Nazareth. In our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament let us imitate St. Joseph's unwavering faith, joyous hope, and generous love.*

The interior life of St. Joseph was deepened and beautified by his constant contact with the Person of the Incarnate Word. During those blessed years which we call the hidden life of Christ, St. Joseph enjoyed the physical presence of God's own Son, whose divinity, though concealed beneath the veil of human flesh, he nevertheless perceived with the eyes of faith. The inevitable result of this close contact with Christ was peace, as St. Paul proclaims: "He Himself is our peace" (Eph. 2:14). Hence, St. Joseph, living in the blessed peace of Nazareth, diffused that peace among his fellow men and became united with them through his Foster Son, who would later make to His Father that prayer of all-surpassing charity: "That all may be one" (John 17:21).

The peace of Nazareth was, then, for St. Joseph, the prelude to that peace of heaven which is essentially union through Christ with the Father. For St. Joseph, the physical presence of Christ was the efficacious cause of that peace. For those, however, who were not to experience His physical presence on this earth, Christ made provision through a miracle of love. On the altar, under the sacra-

mental species, Christ is as truly present as He was in the carpenter shop at Nazareth. But, as St. Thomas points out, in Nazareth only His divinity lay concealed; in the Eucharist, both humanity and divinity are hidden.

Because of his unique role of shadow of the Eternal Father, St. Joseph was united with the Father through Christ, and thus lived in continual anticipation of the face-to-face vision of God in heaven. This same consciousness of the Father, this desire for union with Him in heaven, Christ intends His Presence among us in the Blessed Sacrament to effect. This is the emphatic message which He repeated so insistently the night before His passion. Not only is the Holy Eucharist a Sacrament which engenders faith and love; it is the basis of our hope. It prompts us to view all things *sub specie aeternitatis* — in the light of eternity — and thereby to establish a proper order and peace in our lives. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." St. Joseph, in his devotion to the Divine Child at Nazareth, sets the example for our devotion to the same Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Sister Emily Joseph, REFLECTING ON ST. JOSEPH

## DECEMBER

## FOURTH WEEK

## St. Joseph in the Cave at Bethlehem

*"St. Joseph is kneeling by the Child in the cave of Bethlehem. Let us draw near, and kneel there with him, and follow his thoughts afar off. It is but an hour since that Babe*

***was born into the world, and gladdened Mary's eyes with the divine consolations of His face.*** — **Father Faber**

Joseph draws near to adore. The earthly shadow of the Eternal Father rests softly on the Child. His temporal birth is complete in its adumbration of His unbeginning and unending Nativity. Joseph draws near, that most hidden of all God's saints, shrouded in the very clouds and shadows which surround the unbegotten Fountain of the Godhead. His soul is an abyss of nameless graces, of graces deeper than those from which ordinary virtues spring, roots which make no trial of the winter of this world, but wait to bear marvelous blossoms before the Face of God in the world to come. . . .

St. Joseph draws near to the new-born Jesus, that he may adore before he commands. His vast soul fills silently with love, and his life would have broken and ebbd away at the Infant's feet upon the floor of the cave, as it did years afterward on His lap; but the time was not come, and the Babe sanctified him anew, and fortified him with amazing, quiet strength and robust gentleness, and raised him into a higher sphere of holiness and of grace unspeakable, in order that he might be the official superior of his God.

Who shall dare to guess what Jesus thought with His human thoughts, as He lay there for a moment on the ground, beholding with His eyes that furniture of the cave which Mary had been beholding, and which He had chosen from all eternity? . . . Who shall tell with what exulting reverence He yearned toward Joseph? For Mary and Joseph were both radiantly wet all over with that Precious Blood, which, yet unshed, was flowing in His veins and throbbing in His Heart. Those Three! they

were three kingdoms of God, but one King; three creations, and the Creator one of these creations; three, yet as it were but one, one with an amazing unity, a unity which made them one, yet left them three, the earthly trinity. . . .

Joseph . . . worshiped Him as no saint before had done. From his deep, calm soul he had poured out a very ocean of love, tenderest love, humblest love, love shrinking from being like the Father's love, yet also daring to be like it, as Mary's had been like the conjoined loves of Father and of Spirit, as she was Mother and Spouse conjoined. No angel might love Jesus as Joseph loved Him, as Joseph was bound to love Him. . . . Oh, joyous thought, oh, grateful remembrance, that Jesus was thus welcomed into the world!

Frederick William Faber, BETHLEHEM

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